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TRADITIONS

OF

LANCASHIRE.

BY

J. ROBY, M.R.S.L.

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"I know I have herein made myself subject unto a world of judges, and am likest to receive most controulment of such as are least able to sentence me. Well I wote that the works of no writers have appeared to the world in a more curious age than this; and that, therefore, the more circumspection and wariness is required in the publishing of any thing that must endure so many sharp sights and censures. The consideration whereof, as it hath made me the more heedy not to displease any, so hath it given me the less hope of pleasing all." VERSTEGAN, *Rest. dec. Ant.*

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

SECOND EDITION.

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TO

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

THE COUNTESS OF BALCARRES,

WHOSE KIND INTEREST AND SUPPORT

HE HAS TO ACKNOWLEDGE

DURING THE PROGRESS OF THE WORK,

THESE PAGES

ARE MOST RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED,

BY HER LADYSHIP'S

MOST OBLIGED

AND HUMBLE SERVANT,

JOHN ROBY.

PREFACE.

A PREFACE is rarely needed, generally intrusive, and always tiresome,—seldom read, more seldom desiderated: a piece of egotism at best, where the author, speaking of himself, has the less chance of being listened to. Yet—and what speaker does not think he ought to be heard?—the Author conceives there may be some necessity, some reason why he should step forward for the purpose of explaining his views, in connexion with the character and design of the following pages.

In the northern counties, and more particularly in Lancashire, the great arena of the STANLEYS during the civil wars,—where the progress and successful issue of his cause was but too confidently anticipated by CHARLES STUART, and the scene especially of those strange and unholy proceedings in which the "Lancashire Witches" rendered themselves so famous,—it may readily be imagined that a number of interesting legends, anecdotes, and scraps of family history, are floating about, hitherto preserved

chiefly in the shape of oral tradition. The antiquary, in most instances, rejects the information that does not present itself in the form of an authentic and well-attested fact; and legendary lore, in particular, he throws aside, as worthless and unprofitable. The author of the "TRADITIONS OF LANCASHIRE," in leaving the dry and heraldic pedigrees which unfortunately constitute the great bulk of those works that bear the name of county histories, enters on the more entertaining, though sometimes apocryphal narratives, which exemplify and embellish the records of our forefathers.

A native of Lancashire, and residing there during the greater part of his life, he has been enabled to collect a mass of local traditions, now fast dying from the memories of the inhabitants. It is his object to perpetuate these interesting relics of the past, and to present them in a form that may be generally acceptable, divested of the dust and dross in which the originals are but too often disfigured, so as to appear worthless and uninviting.

Tradition is not an unacceptable source of historical enquiry; and the writer who disdains to follow these glimmerings of truth will often find himself in the dark, with nothing but his own opinions—the smouldering vapour of his own imagination—to guide him in the search.

The following extract from a German writer on this subject, sufficiently exemplifies and illustrates

the design the author has generally had before him, in the composition and arrangement of the following legends:—

"Simple and unimportant as the subject may at first appear, it will be found, upon a nearer view, well worth the attention of philosophical and historical enquirers. All genuine, popular Tales, arranged with local and national reference, cannot fail to throw light upon contemporary events in history, upon the progressive cultivation of society, and upon the prevailing modes of thinking in every age. Though not consisting of a recital of bare facts, they are, in most instances, founded upon fact, and in so far connected with history, which occasionally, indeed, borrows from, and as often reflects light upon these familiar annals, these more private and interesting casualties of human life.

"It is thus that popular tradition, connected with all that is most interesting in human history and human action, upon a national scale—a mirror reflecting the people's past worth and wisdom—invariably possesses so deep a hold upon its affections, and offers so many instructive hints to the man of the world, to the statesman, the citizen, and the peasant.

"Signs of approaching changes, no less in manners than in states, may likewise be traced, floating down this popular current of opinions, fertilizing the seeds scattered by a past generation, and marking by its

ebbs and flows the state of the political atmosphere, and the distant gathering of the storm.

"National traditions further serve to throw light upon ancient and modern mythology; and, in many instances, they are known to preserve traces of their fabulous descent, as will clearly appear in some of the following selections. It is the same with those of all nations, whether of eastern or western origin, Greek, Scythian, or Kamtschatkan. And hence, among every people just emerged out of a state of barbarism, the same causes lead to the production of similar compositions; and a chain of connexion is thus established between the fables of different nations, only varied by clime and custom, sufficient to prove, not merely a degree of harmony, but secret interchanges and communications."

A record of the freaks of such airy beings, glancing through the mists of national superstition, would prove little inferior, in poetical interest and association, to the fanciful creations of the Greek mythology. The truth is, they are of one family, and we often discover allusions to the beautiful fable of Psyche, or the story of Midas;—sometimes with the addition, that the latter was obliged to admit his barber into his uncomfortable secret. Odin and Jupiter are brothers, if not the same person; and the northern Hercules is often represented as drawing a strong man by almost invisible threads, which pass from his tongue round the limbs of the victim,

thereby symbolizing the power of eloquence. Several incidents in the following tales will be recognised by those conversant with Scandinavian literature, thus adding another link to the chain of certainty which unites the human race, or at any rate that part of it from which Europe was originally peopled, in one original tribe or family.

A work of this nature, embodying the material of our own island traditions, has not yet been attempted; and the writer confidently hopes that these tales may be found fully capable of awakening and sustaining the peculiar and high-wrought interest inherent in the legends of our continental neighbours. Should they fail of producing this effect, he requests that it may be attributed rather to his want of power to conjure up the spirits of past ages, than to any want of capabilities in the subjects he has chosen to introduce.

To the local and to the general reader—to the antiquary and the uninitiated—to the admirers of the fine arts and embellishments of our literature, he hopes his labours will prove acceptable; and should the plan succeed, not Lancashire alone, but the other counties may, in their turn, become the subject of similar illustrations. The tales are arranged chronologically, forming a somewhat irregular series from the earliest records to those of a comparatively modern date. They may in point of style appear at the commencement stiff and stalwart, like the chiselled warriors, whose deeds are generally enveloped in a rude narrative, hard

and ponderous as their gaunt and grisly effigies. The events, however, as the author has found them, gradually assimilate with the familiar aspects and every day affections of our nature,—subsiding from the stern and repulsive character of a barbarous age, into the usual forms and modes of feeling incident to humanity,—as some cold and barren region, where one stunted blade of affection can scarce find shelter, gradually opens out into the quiet glades and lowly habitudes of ordinary existence.

The author disclaims all pretensions to superior knowledge. He would not even arrogate to himself the name of antiquary. Some of the incidents are, perhaps, well known, being merely put into a novel and more popular shape. The spectator is here placed upon an eminence, where the scenes assume a new aspect, new combinations of beauty and grandeur being the result of the vantage ground he has obtained. Nothing more is attempted than what others, with the same opportunities, might have done as well, —perhaps better. When Columbus broke the egg,—if we may be excused the arrogance of the simile,—all that were present could have done the same; and some, no doubt, might have performed the operation more dexterously.

1st October, 1829.

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

THE Author gladly avails himself of this re-print of the Work, to express his thanks and his gratification at the very favourable manner in which it has been received, and the flattering testimonials he has gained through the medium of the public press. One remark only on this head he feels called upon to notice. In one of the periodicals it is stated, in a very able article on the subject, that, in all probability, the design was suggested by "THE ROMANCE OF HISTORY." To this observation the following will be a sufficient reply: "THE TRADITIONS OF LANCASHIRE" were announced as preparing for publication several months before the appearance of the former work.

To the writer of this review,* however, the Author would express his thanks for the candid and able manner in which he has noticed the subject, and for the flattering opinion he has expressed of the style and execution of the Work.

Rochdale,
April 10, 1830.

* Monthly Review. Jan. 1830.

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SIR TARQUIN.

"Within this ancient British land,
In Lancashire I understand,
Near Manchester, there lived a knight of fame,
Of a prodigious strength and might,
Who vanquished many a worthy knight;
A giant great, and Tarquin was his name."

BALLAD OF SIR TARQUIN.

SIR TARQUIN.

As it is our intention to arrange these traditions in chronological order, we begin with the earliest upon record, the overthrow of the giant Tarquin, near Manchester, by Sir Lancelot of the Lake, who was supposed to bear rule over the western part of Lancashire.

An old ballad commemorates the achievement; and many other relics of this tradition still exist, one of which, a rude carving on a ceiling in the College at Manchester, represents the giant Tarquin at his morning's repast; it being fabled that he devoured a child daily at this meal. The legs of the infant are seen sprawling out of his mouth in the most unseemly fashion. Some have supposed that Tarquin was but a symbol or personification of the Roman army, and his castle the Roman station in this neighbourhood.

The following extract is from Dr. Hibbert's pamphlet on the subject:—

"Upon the site of Castlefield, near Manchester, was originally erected a British fortress by the Sistuntii, the earliest possessors of Lancashire, comprising an area of twelve acres. It would possess on the south, south-east,

and south-west, every advantage from the winding of the river Medlock, and on its west, from the lofty banks which overlooked an impenetrable morass. By the artificial aid, therefore, of a ditch and a rampart on its east and north sides, this place was rendered a fortress of no inconsiderable importance. This fell afterwards into the hands of the Brigantes, the ancient inhabitants of Durham, York, and Westmoreland. Upon the invasion of the Romans, Cereales, their general, attacked the proper Brigantes of Yorkshire and Durham, and freed the Sistuntii of Lancashire from their dominion, but reserved the former to incur the Roman yoke. In A.D. 79, this British hold was changed into a Roman castrum, garrisoned by the first Frisian cohort, who erected from the old materials a new fort on the Roman construction, part of the vallum remaining to this day. New roads were made, and the British were invited to form themselves into the little communities of cities, to check the spirit of independence kept alive in the uncivilised abodes of deserted forests. The Romans possessed the fortress for nearly 300 years, when they were summoned away to form part of the army intended to repel the myriads of barbarians that threatened to over-run Europe.

"By contributing to their refinement, and protecting them from the inroads of the Picts and Scots, the Romans were regarded in a friendly light by the ancient inhabitants; and their departure was much regretted. It became necessary, however, that the Britons should elect a chief from their own nation. Their military positions were strengthened; and as the Roman model of a fortress did not suit their military taste, instead of one encircled with walls only seven or eight feet high, and furnishing merely

pavilions for soldiers within, they preferred erecting, on the sites of stations, large buildings of stone, whose chambers should contain more convenient barracks for the garrison. An infinite number of these castles existed within a century after the departure of the Romans, of which our castle at Manchester was one, carried to a great height, erected in a good taste, secured at the entrances with gates, and flanked at the sides with towers.

"The Britons, however, unable of themselves to cope with their foes, imprudently invited the Saxons, who, after subduing the Caledonians, laid waste the country of the Britons with fire and sword. The castle of Manchester surrendered A.D. 488."

We have endeavoured to preserve the character and manner of the ancient chroniclers, and even their fanciful etymologies, in the following record, of which the quaint but not inelegant style, in some measure, almost unavoidably adapts itself to the subject.

SIR TARQUIN.

Sir Lancelot of the Lake, as it is related by the older chronicles, was the son of Ban, king of Benoit, in Brittany. Flying from his castle, then straitly besieged, the fugitive king saw it in flames, and soon after expired with grief. His queen Helen, fruitlessly attempting to save his life, abandoned, for a while, her infant son Lancelot. Returning, she discovered him in the arms of the nymph Vivian, the mistress of Merlin, who, on her approach, sprung with the child into a deep lake, and disappeared. This lake is held by some to be the lake Linius, a wide insular water

near the sea coast, in the regions of Linius, or "the Lake;" now called Martin Mere or *Mar-tain-moir*, "a water like the sea."

The nymph educated the infant at her court, fabulously said to have been held in the subterraneous caverns of this lake, and from hence he was styled Lancelot du Lac.

At the age of eighteen the fairy conveyed him to the camp of King Arthur, who was then waging a fierce and exterminating warfare with the Saxons. Here the young warrior was invested with the badge of knighthood. His person, accomplishments, and unparalleled bravery, having won the heart of many a fair dame in this splendid abode of chivalry and romance, his name and renown filled the land, where he was throughout acknowledged as chief of "the Knights of the Round Table."

The name of Lancelot is derived from history, and is an appellation truly British, signifying royalty; *Lanc* being the Celtic term for a spear, and *lod* or *lot* implying a people. Hence the name of Lancelot's shire, or Lancashire. From the foregoing, it is supposed that he resided in the region of Linius, and that he was the monarch of these parts, being ruler over the whole, or the greater part, of what is now called Lancashire.

Arthur, king of the Silures, being selected by Ambrosius for the command of the army, he defeated the Saxons in twelve pitched battles. Four of these were obtained, as related by Nennius, on the river called Duglas,* or Douglas, a little stream which runneth, as we are further told,

* Du-glass, "the becoming, the seemly, green," described by Camden as "a small brook, running with an easy and still stream;" which conveys a good idea of the word *Du*. The Du-glass empties itself into the estuary

in the region of Linius. On reference, it will be found that this river passes through a great portion of the western side of Lancashire, and pretty accurately fixes the position here described.

Three of these great victories were gotten near Wigan, and the other is currently reported to have been achieved near Blackrod, close to a Roman station, then probably fortified, and remaining as a place of some strength, and in possession of the Saxon invaders. Here, according to rude legends, "the river Duglas ran with blood to Wigan three days."

It was during one of the brief intervals of rest that sometimes occurred in the prosecution of these achievements, that the following incident is reported to have happened. Being a passage of some note, and the earliest tradition of the county upon record, we have chosen it as the commencement of a work principally derived from traditionary history.

Sir Tarquin, a cruel and treacherous knight of gigantic stature, and prodigious strength, had, as the story is currently told, his dwelling in a well-fortified castle nigh to Manchester, on the site of what is yet known by the name of Castle Field. It was a place of great strength, surrounded by vast ramparts, and flanked at the corners with high and stately towers.

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called by Ptolemy, *Bellesama, Bell-ess-aman-e;* pronounced Violish-aune,* the literal meaning of which is, that the "mouth of the river only is for ships;" *i. e.*, that the rivers which form the haven are not navigable.—*Chronicles of Eri.—O'Connor.*

* Ballyshannon is evidently a very slight corruption of this term.

He had, by treachery, gained possession of the fortress, treating the owner, who was a British knight of no mean condition, with great cruelty and rigour. This doughty Saxon, Sir Tarquin, had, along with many of his nation, been invited over in aid of the Britons against their neighbours, the Picts and Scots. These being driven back, their false allies treacherously made war upon their friends, laying waste the country with fire and sword. Then arose that noble brotherhood, "The Knights of the Round Table," who, having sworn to avenge the wrongs of their country, began to harass the intruders, and to drive them from their ill-gotten possessions.

The Saxons were no less vigilant; but many of their most puissant knights were slain or imprisoned during these encounters.

Sir Tarquin could boast of no mean success: three score knights and four, it is said, were held in thrall by this uncourteous chieftain.

Sir Lancelot having, as the ballad quaintly expresses it,

> "A mighty giant, just pulled down,
> Who lived near Shrewsbury's fair town,
> With his keen sword his life away did take."

This giant knight was called Sir Carados; and Sir Lancelot, when about betaking himself to these and similar recreations, did hear doleful tidings out of Lancashire, how that Sir Tarquin was playing the eagle in the hawk's eyrie, amongst his brethren and companions. From Winchester he rode in great haste, succouring not a few distressed damsels, and performing many other notable exploits by the way, "until he came to a vast desert," "frequented

by none save those whom ill fortune had permitted to wander therein."

Sir Tarquin, like the dragon of yore, entailed a desert round his dwelling: so fierce and rapacious was he, that no man durst live beside him, save that he held his life and property of too mean account, and too worthless for the taking.

The Knight was pricking on his way through this almost pathless wilderness, when he espied a damsel of such inexpressible and ravishing beauty, that none might behold her without the most heart-stirring delight and admiration. To this maiden did Sir Lancelot address himself; but she hid her face and fell a weeping. He then enquired the cause of her dolour, when she bade him flee, for his life was in great jeopardy.

"Oh, Sir Knight!" uncovering her face as she spoke, "the giant Tarquin liveth hereabout, and thou wert as good as dead, should he espy thee so near his castle."

"What!" said the Knight, "and shall Sir Lancelot of the Lake flee before this false and cruel tyrant? To this purpose am I come, that I may slay and make an end of him at once, and deliver the captives."

"Art thou, indeed, Sir Lancelot?" said the damsel, joy suddenly starting through her tears; "then is our deliverance nearer than we hoped for. Thy fame is gone before thee into all countries; and thy might and thy prowess, it is said, none may withstand. This evil one, Sir Tarquin, hath taken captive my true knight, who, through my cruelty, betook himself to this adventure, and now lieth in chains and foul ignominy, without hope of release, until death break off his fetters."

"Beshrew me," said Lancelot, "but I will deliver him

presently, and cut off the foul tyrant's head, or lose mine own by the attempt."

Then did he follow the maiden to a river's brink, near to where, as tradition still reports, now stand the Knott Mills. Having mounted her before him on his steed, she pointed out a path over the ford, beyond which he soon espied the castle, a vast and stately building of rugged stone, like a huge crown upon the hill-top, which presented a gentle ascent from the stream.

Now did Sir Lancelot alight, as well to assist his companion as to bethink himself what course to pursue; but the damsel shewed him a high tree, about a stone's throw from the ditch before the castle, whereon hung a goodly array of accoutrements, with many fair and costly shields, on which were displayed a variety of gay and fanciful devices. These were the property of the knights then held in durance by Sir Tarquin. Below them all hung a copper basin, on which was carved in Latin the following inscription, translated thus:—

> "Who valueth not his life a whit,
> Let him this magic basin hit."

This so enraged Sir Lancelot, that he drove at the vessel violently with his spear, piercing it through and through, so vigorous was the assault. The clangour was loud, and anxiously did the knight await for some reply to his summons. Yet there was no answer, nor was there any stir about the walls or outworks. It seemed as though Sir Tarquin was his own castellan, skulking here alone, like the cunning spider watching for his prey.

Silence, with her vast and unmoving wings, appeared to brood over the place; and echo, that gave back their

summons from the walls, seemed to labour for utterance, through the void by which they were encompassed. A stillness so appalling might needs discourage the hot and fiery purpose of Sir Lancelot, who, unused but to the rude clash of arms, and the mêlée of the battle, did marvel exceedingly at this forbearance of the enemy. But he still rode round about the fortress, expecting that some one should come forth to enquire his business, and this did he, to and fro, for a long space. As he was just minded to return from so fruitless an adventure, he saw a cloud of dust at some distance, and presently he beheld a knight galloping furiously towards him. Coming nigh, Sir Lancelot was aware that a captive knight lay before him, bound hand and foot, bleeding and sore wounded.

"Villain!" cried Sir Lancelot, "and unworthy the name of a true and loyal knight; how darest thou do this insult and contumely to an enemy, who, though fallen, is yet thine equal? I will make thee rue this foul despite, and avenge the wrongs of my brethren of the Round Table."

"If thou be for so brave a meal," said Tarquin, "thou shalt have thy fill, and that speedily. I will first cut off thy head, and then serve up thy carcass to the Round Table; for both that and thee I do utterly defy!"

"That is over dainty food for thy sending," replied Sir Lancelot, hastily, and with that they couched their spears. The first rush was over, but man and horse had withstood the shock. Again they fell back, measuring the distance with an eager and impetuous glance, and again they rushed on, as if to overwhelm each other by main strength, when, as fortune would have it, their lances shivered, both of them at once, in the rebound.

The end of Sir Lancelot's spear, as it broke, struck his adversary's steed on the shoulder, and caused him to fall suddenly, as if sore wounded. Sir Tarquin leaped nimbly from off his back; which Sir Lancelot espying, he cried out,—

"Now will I shew thee the like courtesy; for by mine honour, and the faith of a true knight, I will not slay thee at this foul advantage." Alighting with haste, they betook themselves to their swords, each guarding the opposite attack warily with his shield. That of Sir Tarquin was framed of a bull's hide, stoutly held together with thongs, and, in truth, seemed well nigh impenetrable; whilst the shield of his opponent, being of more brittle stuff, did seem as though it would have cloven asunder with the desperate strokes of Sir Tarquin's sword. Nothing daunted, Sir Lancelot brake oft-times through his adversary's guard, and smote him once until the blood trickled down amain. At this sight, Sir Tarquin waxed ten times more fierce; and summoning all his strength for the blow, wrought so lustily on the head of Sir Lancelot, that he began to reel; which Tarquin observing, by a side blow struck the sword from out his hand with so sharp and dexterous a jerk, that it shivered into a thousand fragments.

"Now yield thee, Sir Knight, or thou diest;" and with that the cruel monster sprang upon him to accomplish his end. Still Sir Lancelot would not yield, nor sue to him for quarter, but flew on his enemy like the ravening wolf to his prey. Then were they seen hurtling together like wild bulls,—Sir Lancelot holding fast his adversary's sword, so that in vain he attempted to make a thrust therewith.

"Thou discourteous churl! give me but the advantage of

a weapon like thine own, and I will fight thee honestly, and without flinching."

"Nay, Sir Knight of the Round Table, but this were a merry deed withal, to help thee unto that wherewith I might perchance mount some goodly bough for the crows to peck at," replied Tarquin. Terrible and unceasing was the struggle; but in vain the giant knight attempted to regain the use of his sword. Then Sir Lancelot, with a wary eye, finding no hope of his life, save in the use or accomplishment of some notable stratagem, bethought him of the attempt to throw his adversary by a sudden feint. To this end he pressed against him heavily, and with his whole might, then darting suddenly aside, Sir Tarquin fell to the ground, with a loud cry, which, Sir Lancelot espying, leapt joyfully upon him, thinking to overcome his enemy; but the latter, too cunning to be thus caught at unawares, kept his sword firmly holden,—and his enemy was still unprovided with the means of defence. Now did Sir Lancelot begin to doubt what course he should pursue, when suddenly the damsel, who having bound up the wounds of the captive knight as he lay, and now sate a little way off, watching the event, cried out, with a shrill voice,—

"Sir Knight, the tree:—a goodly bough for the gathering." Then did Sir Lancelot remember the weapons that were there, along with the shields and the body armour of the knights Sir Tarquin had vanquished. Starting up, ere his enemy had recovered himself, he snatched a broad falchion from the bough, and again defied him to the combat. But the fight was fiercer than before; so that being sore wounded, and the day exceeding hot, they were, after a season, fain to pause for breath.

"Thou art the bravest knight I ever encountered," said Sir Tarquin, "and I would crave thy country and thy name; for by my troth, and the honour of my gods, I will give thee thy request, on one condition, and release thy brethren of the Round Table: for why should two knights of such pith and prowess slay each other in one day?"

"And what is thy condition?" enquired Sir Lancelot,

"There liveth but one, either in Christendom or Heathenesse, unto whom I may not grant this parley; for him have I sworn to kill," said Sir Tarquin.

"'T is well," replied the other; "but what name or cognisance hath he?"

"His name is Lancelot of the Lake!"

"Behold him!" was the reply,—Sir Lancelot at the same time brandishing his weapon with a shout of defiance.

When Sir Tarquin heard this, he gnashed his teeth for very rage.

"Now one of us must die," said he. "Thou slewest my brother Sir Carados, at Shrewsbury, and I have sworn to avenge his defeat. Thou diest! Not all the gods of thy fathers shall deliver thee."

So-to it they went, with more heat and fury than ever; and a marvel was it to behold, for each blow did seem as it would have cleft the other in twain, so deadly was the strife and hatred between them.

Sir Lancelot pressed hard upon his foe, though himself grievously wounded, and, in all likelihood, would have won the fight, but, as ill luck would have it, when dealing a blow, mighty enough to fell the stoutest oak in Christendom, he missed his aim, and with that stumbled to the ground. Then did Sir Tarquin shout for joy, and would

have made an end of him, but that Sir Lancelot, as he lay, aimed a deadly thrust below his enemy's shield where he was left unguarded, and quickly turned his joy into tribulation; for Sir Tarquin, though not mortally wounded, drew back, and cried out lustily for pain, the which Sir Lancelot hearing, he leapt again to his feet, still eager and impatient for the strife.

The contest was again doubtful, neither of them showing any disposition to yield, or in any wise to abate the rigour of the conflict. Night, too, was coming on apace, and seemed like enough to pitch her tent over them, ere the issue was decided. But an event now fell out, which, unexpectedly enough, terminated this adventure. From some cause arising out of the haste and rapidity of the strokes, one of these so chanced, that both their swords were suddenly driven from out of their right hands; stooping together, by some subtlety or mistake, they exchanged weapons. Then did Sir Lancelot soon find his strength to increase, whilst his adversary's vigour began to abate; and, in the end, Sir Lancelot slew him, and with his own sword cut off his head. He then perceived that the giant's great strength was by virtue of his sword; and that it was through his wicked enchantments therewith, he had been able to overcome, and had wrought such disgrace on the Knights of the Round Table. Sir Lancelot forthwith took the keys from the giant's girdle, and proceeded to the release of the captive knights, first unbinding the prisoner, who yet lay in a piteous swoon hard by. But there was a great outcry and lamentation, when that he saw his own brother Sir Erclos in this doleful case; for it was he whom the cruel Tarquin

was leading captive when he met the just reward of his misdeeds.

After administering to his relief, Sir Lancelot rode up to the castle-gate, but found no entrance thereby. The draw-bridge was raised, and he sought in vain the means of giving the appointed signal for its descent.

But the damsel showed him a secret place, where hung a little horn. On this he blew a sharp and ringing blast, when the bridge presently began to lower, and instantly to adjust itself across the moat; whereon, hastening, he unlocked the gate. But here he had nigh fallen into a subtle snare, by reason of an ugly dwarf that was concealed in a side niche of the wall. He was armed with a ponderous mace; and had not the maiden drawn Sir Lancelot aside by main force, he would have been crushed in its descent, the dwarf aiming a deadly blow at him as he passed. It fell, instead, with a loud crash on the pavement, and broke into a thousand fragments. Thereupon, Sir Lancelot smote him with the giant's sword, and hewed the mischievous monster asunder without mercy. Turning towards the damsel, he beheld her form suddenly change, and she vanished from his sight; then was he aware that it had been the nymph Vivian who accompanied him through the enchantments he had so happily subdued. He soon released his brethren, and great was the joy at the Round Table when the Knights returned to the banquet.

Thus endeth the chronicle of Sir Tarquin, still a notable tradition in these parts, the remains of his castle being shown to this day.

THE

GOBLIN BUILDERS.

" By wells and rills, in meadows green,
We nightly dance our heyday guise;
And to our fairy king and queen
We chant our moonlight minstrelsies.
When larks 'gin sing,
Away we fling,
And babes new born we steal as we go,
And elf in bed
We leave instead,
And wend us laughing, ho, ho, ho!"

BEN JONSON.

THE

GOBLIN BUILDERS.

THE story which serves for the basis of the following legend, will be easily recognised in the neighbourhood where the transactions are said to have occurred, though, probably, not known beyond its immediate locality.

The accessories are gathered from a number of sources: and the great difficulty the author has had to encounter in getting at what he conceives the real state and character of the time, together with the history of contemporary individuals and events, so as to give a natural picture of the manners and customs of that remote era, can be known by those only who have entered into pursuits of this nature. In this and in the succeeding legends, he has attempted to illustrate and portray the customs of that particular epoch to which they relate, as well as to detail the events on which they are founded.

It may be interesting to notice, that a similar exploit is recorded in the Scandinavian Legends, and may be traced, under many variations of circumstances and events, in the Icelandic, Danish, and Norwegian poetry, affording another intimation of the source from whence our popular mythology is derived.

THE

GOBLIN BUILDERS.

TOWARDS the latter end of the reign of William, the Norman conqueror, Gamel, the Saxon Thane, Lord of Recedham or "Rached," being left in the quiet possession of his lands and privileges by the usurper, "minded,"—as the phrase then was,—"for the fear of God and the salvation of his immortal soul, to build a chapel unto St. Chadde," nigh to the banks of the Rache or Roach. For this pious use, a convenient place was set apart, lying

on the north bank of the river, in a low and sheltered spot, now called "The Newgate." Piles of timber and huge stones were gathered thither in the most unwonted profusion; insomuch, that the building seemed destined for some more ambitious display than the humble edifices, called churches, then exhibited, of which but few existed in the surrounding districts.

The foundations were laid. The loose and spongy nature of the soil required heavy stakes to be driven, upon and between which were laid several courses of rubble-stone, ready to receive the grouting or cement. Yet in one night was the whole mass conveyed, without the loss of a single stone, to the summit of a steep hill on the opposite bank, and apparently without any visible marks or signs betokening the agents or means employed for its removal. It did seem as though their pathway had been the viewless air, so silently was all track obliterated. Great was the consternation that spread among the indwellers of the four several clusters of cabins, dignified by the appellation of villages, and bearing, with their appendages, the names of Castletown, Spoddenland, Honorsfield, and Buckland. With dismay and horror this profanation was witnessed. The lord, more especially, became indignant. This daring presumption — this wilful outrage, so like bidding defiance to his power, bearding the lion even in his den, was deemed an offence calling for signal vengeance upon the perpetrators.

At the cross in Honorsfield a proclamation was recited, to the intent, that unless the offending parties were forthwith given up to meet the punishment that might be awarded to their misdeeds, a heavy mulct would follow, and the unfortunate villains and *bordarii* be subject to

such farther infliction as might still seem wanting to assuage their lord's displeasure. Now this was a grievous disaster to the unhappy vassals, seeing that none could safely or truly accuse his neighbour. All were agreed that human agency had no share in the work. The wiser part threw out a shrewd suspicion, that the old deities, whom their forefathers had worshipped, and whose altars had been thrown down, and their sacrifices forbidden, had burst the thraldom in which they were aforetime held by the Christian priests, and were now brooding a fearful revenge for the many insults they had endured. But the decree from the lord was hasty, and the command urgent; so that a council was holden for the devising of some plan for their relief.

Hugh de Chadwycke and John de Spotland were subordinate lords, or feudataries, holding fortified dwellings, castelets or peels, in the manor of Rochdale; the former had builded his rude mansion of massive timber, for the double purpose of habitation and defence, on a bold eminence forming a steep bank of the river, about a mile from the Thane's castle. Claiming a relationship to the lord, he was, in some measure, privileged above his friend de Spotland, yet was the latter a personage of considerable power and influence at the manor court. To these men, when their aid was necessary, either as counsellors or intercessors, did the inhabitants generally repair.

Hugh de Chadwycke was a man of mild and grave deportment, but politic withal, and wary of counsel. John de Spotland was of a more bold and open temper. De Chadwycke suggested a submissive application to the Thane, with a pledge that all possible diligence should be used for the fulfilment of his demands. John urged the

removal of the materials with all expedition to their original site, a watch being set to discover the delinquents, should they again presume to lay hands on the stuff. The wisdom and propriety of the latter precaution was undisputed; but no one seemed willing to undergo the terrible ordeal, each declining the office in deference to his more privileged neighbour. No wonder at their reluctance to so unequal a contest. To be strangled or torn limb from limb, was the slightest punishment that could be expected for this daring profanation; yet, unless they had witnessed, bodily, to these diabolical exploits, it were needless to attempt excusing themselves before the haughty chieftain. He would visit with fearful severity all their endeavours to deceive; nor would he credit their belief, unless it were confirmed by the testimony of an eye-witness. How to procure this desirable source of intelligence, was a question that was hourly becoming more difficult to solve.

Slow and melancholy was their return, while with fear and hesitation they communicated the result.

"Now, shame befall thee, Adam of Will's!" said a stout woman, to one of the speakers; "thou wert ever a tough fighter; and the cudgel and ragged staff were as glib in thine hands, as a beggar's pouch on alms-days. Show thy mettle, man. I 'll spice thee a jug of barley-drink, an' thou be for the bout this time."

"Nay," returned Adam, "I 'll fight Beelzebub if he be aught I can hit; but these same boggarts, they say, a blow falls on 'em like rain-drops on a mist, or like beating the wind with a corn-flail. I cannot fight with naught, as it were."

"Shame on thee, Hal!" said a shrill-tongued, crooked

little body, arrayed in a coarse grey hood, and holding a stick, like unto a one-handed crutch, of enormous dimensions. "Shame on thee! I would watch myself, but the night-wind sits indifferently on my stomach, and I am too old now for these moonshine lifts."

She cast her little bleared eyes, half shut, and distilling contempt, on the cowardly bystanders.

"Now, if there be not old Cicely,"—first went round in a whisper;—then a deep silence gradually pervaded the assembly.

She had just hobbled down to the Cross, and the audience seemed to watch her looks with awe and suspicion.

"What, none o' ye? Come, Uctred, thou shalt shame these big-tongued, wide-mouthed boasters."

A short, swarthy-looking boy, with a leering and unfavourable countenance, here stepped forward, taking his station upon one of the steps beside his mother. A notion had gone abroad, that the boy was the fruit of some unhallowed intercourse with an immortal of the fairy or pixy kind, whose illicit amours the old woman had wickedly indulged. She too was thought to bear, in some degree, a charmed life, and to hold communion with intelligences not of the most holy or reputable order. The boy was dumb. His lips had however, at times, a slight and tremulous movement, which strongly impressed the beholders that some discourse was then carrying on between "the dummy," as he was generally called, and his invisible relatives. His whole aspect was singularly painful and forbidding.

No wonder, in these times of debasing superstition, that his person should be looked on with abhorrence, and even

a touch from him be accounted an evil of no slight import. His mother alone had the power of communicating with him, or of understanding his grimaces.

"Now, what will ye give me for the use of his pretty eyes this lucky night? The Thane will have regard to his testimony, though all that have free use of the tongue he holds to be liars and dishonest. Never lied this youth by sign or token!"

A buzz went through the company, and the dame and her boy again sat down to await the issue. All eyes were directed towards them, timidly and by stealth, as the consultation grew louder and more continuous.

A pause at length ensued. Some three or four of the group drew towards the crone, who sat almost double, her chin resting on the neb of her crutch.

"Now will we give thee two changes of raiment, together with a mess of barley-pottage; and every year thou shalt have a penny at Easter, and a fat hen at Shrovetide."

"Good," said the greedy beldame; "but I'll have a sheep-skin cap for the boy, and a horn spoon." This demand was also granted; after which she made signs to the lad, who swung his head to and fro, at the same time distorting his features with a wild and terrible rapidity. It was evident that he understood the nature of these proceedings. A glance, like that of mockery and derision, he cast towards the crowd; and when Mother Cicely was returning, he threw back upon them a look of scorn and malignity which made the beholders shrink aside with horror.

The people now addressed themselves to the task of replacing the heavy materials, and ere night the greater

part were withdrawn, ready to begin with the foundations again on the morrow.

A sort of rude shelter was constructed, wherein Uctred was to keep watch until day-light.

The morning came, calm and beautiful over the grey hills; and the anxious inhabitants, awake betimes, did each turn his first steps towards the river's brink. With horror and amazement they again beheld the ground bare. Not a vestige remained, nor was there any trace of the boy.

"He is gone to his own," said they, as a general shudder went through the crowd; "and the fairies have gotten him at last."

Every heart seemed quailing with some hidden fear; nor could any means, at that moment, be suggested for their emancipation.

The stones and timber were again found, as before, on the opposite hill. Fifty stout men had with difficulty contrived to fetch them from thence the day preceding, and twice that number would hardly have sufficed to transport them thither. It was not to be gainsayed, that a power superior to their own was the agent in removals so mysterious. Nothing now remained but to acquaint their lord with this second interruption; and their diligence in performing this duty, they hoped, might exculpate them from the heavy doom they had incurred. Some of the wiser and more stout-hearted were chosen to carry these tidings to the Thane, hoping to clear themselves from the ban, as well as to return with commands for their future proceedings.

Gamel de Recedham, or Rochdale, had his dwelling in the ancient castle, built by the Romans on the verge of a

steep hill jutting into the valley of the Roach. It was a place difficult of access, save on the southern side, where a wide ditch formed an effectual defence, and over which a narrow bridge admitted only two abreast in front of the outer gate. It was now, in some places, fast going to decay, but enough remained out of its vast bulk to form a dwelling for the Saxon and his followers. It had been once fortified throughout; the castle, or keep, being four square, flanked at the corners with stone towers. The lower part of the walls was composed of large pebbles mixed with brick, and held together by a firm cement. Higher up, and continued to the summit, were alternate rows of brick and freestone. The corners were faced with stone, making a very formidable appearance when guarded by slingers and throwers of darts, who were stationed there only in times of great peril.

Passing the vallum, or outer defence, they ascended a narrow staircase outside the keep, where the cringing serfs were admitted by four of the lord's Norman bowmen, who ushered them into the audience-chamber.

Some of the Thane's men were habited in coats of mail, made of small pieces of iron, cut round at the bottom, and set on a leathern garment, so as to fold over each other like fish-scales, the whole bending with the greatest ease, and yet affording a sufficient protection to the wearer.

The chamber of audience was situated at the uppermost part of the keep, and great was the apprehension of the intruders, whilst following their guides through the winding passages and gloomy staircases leading to the inner cell occupied by their chief. The disposition of the armed men,—their warlike habiliments, and the

various and uncouth weapons, which seemed to threaten terror and defiance, were all objects, to them, of apprehension and distrust. The walls of this gloomy apartment were lined with thin bricks, ornamentally disposed in herring-bone work, after the fashion of the time. The windows, though narrow on the outside, were broad and arched within, displaying a rude sort of taste in their construction. Round the walls were groups of weapons, ostentatiously displayed; two-edged broad swords; long spears, some barbed and others flat and broad; shields, the oldest of which were large, and had a sharp point projecting from the centre; others, of the Norman and more recent fashion, were smaller, and of an oval shape. Battle-axes, lances, and javelins, were strewn about in formidable profusion. Hauberks, or chain-mail, hung at intervals from the walls, looking grim and stalwart from their repose, like the headless trunks of the warriors they had once encompassed.

A broad curtain, curiously embroidered, covered one end of the room, from behind which crept a page or henchman, in gay attire, his tunic glistening with his lord's device.

The serfs bowed with the most abject submission to this representative of their lord, who lived in the customary style of barbarous and feudal pomp, which the manners of their Norman invaders had rather contributed to increase than to diminish.

"Tell thy Master," said their companion, "that some of the folk would speak with him, touching the matter by which they are in jeopardy."

Smoothing his locks and trimming down his garments, the boy departed. It was long or ere the audience was

granted: in the mean time, they stood trembling and oppressed with an evil foreboding for the result, the known hasty and impetuous temper of the Saxon rendering it a matter of some doubt, and no small hazard, as to what might be the issue of their conference. Suddenly was heard the clanking of armour, and the tramp of nailed feet, announcing his approach; the heavy arras was uplifted, and Gamel the Thane stood before them. He was richly attired, in a loose coat reaching down to his ancles; over this was a long robe, fastened, over both shoulders and on the breast, with a silver buckle. The edges were trimmed with gold, and knots of flowers interwoven with pearls and rare stones. On his head he wore a coronet, or rim of gold, enriched with jewels; and his bushy hair and grizzled beard looked still more grim and forbidding beneath these glittering ornaments. His eyes were quick and piercing; his cheeks pale and slightly furrowed. A narrow and retreating mouth, firmly drawn in, shewed the bent of his disposition to be fierce and choleric, and his wrath not easily turned aside. He was accompanied by his billmen, together with some half dozen attendants, clad in shirts of chain-mail and helmets fitting close to the head. These bore lances after the Norman fashion then prevailing over the ruder customs of their Saxon predecessors.

The more polished manners of the Norman's court had early pervaded the ranks of the nobles; and even the few hereditary Saxon chiefs, left in possession of their ancient sovereignties, thought their domains cheaply purchased by this obsequious show of homage to their king.

The Thane's chief henchman occupied the post of honour, whilst a little footpage stood by his master's elbow.

The villains prostrated themselves.

"How now!—Where are the caitiffs I commanded of ye? I vow to the Virgin and St. Chadde, your own necks shall swing from the tower in their stead, should ye fail in that which I require at your hands."

The trembling hearers were afraid to answer—their lips quivered, and each tongue seemed to refuse its office. Gamel proceeded:—

"What! come ye to fawn and whine out my purpose? Now will I make your chastisement ten times hotter for this intent.—Lodge these knaves, Nicholas, i' the further dungeon, till they be replevied by the rogues who are yet at large, and defying our power:—they hold it somewhat cheap, methinks, when they value it less than the pampering of their own wantonness and sport."

Nicholas was herald, bedellus, or chief crier, to the lord of the manor, his office being to make proclamations at the court and the cross, where the use of his capacious lungs was oft in request. He was hangman, too, upon occasion, being never so well pleased as when employed in the due chastisement of his master's lieges. He was, moreover, a man of infinite humour, generally consoling his dear unfortunates under their visitations by some coarse and galling jest.

"Now, Adam of Hunersfield, art thou at thy prayers already?—I 'll shrive thee quick. Master, shall I give the rogues any victuals? They 'll not keep else till hanging time;—best finish now—needless to waste provender."

"Give them the prison allowance. But, hark thee! no stripes, Nicholas," said the chief, well aware of his flagellant propensities.

"Eh!" replied he; "but black cake and dried beans don't mix well i' the stomach without riddling."

"Peace, sirrah!" replied the chieftain with a frown. Nicholas, though a licensed jester, and in especial favour, knew there was a boundary beyond which he durst not pass; he became silent, therefore, at this command. The lamentations of the unwary hostages were loud, but unavailing. Nicholas prepared his manacles, and was leading them from the chamber, when the page whispered in his master's ear.

"Stop," cried the Thane: "know ye aught of the boy who was a-watching yesternight?"

"We know nothing of the lad, as we hope for deliverance," said the terrified rustics.

"Bring in the woman!"

The command was followed by the entrance of Cicely. Leaning on her crutch, she bent lowly before the chief.

"Hast thou any suit or accusation to prefer against these men, as touching thy boy?"

"Oh! my lord," said the dame, weeping, "I never aforetime knew him missing; and he has slept i' the Killer Dane, where the great battle was fought, below the castle. He has watched i' the 'Thrutch,' where the black dog haunts from sunset till cock-crow. He has leaped over the fairies' ring and run through the old house at Gozlewood, and no harm has befallen him; but he is now ta'en from me,—cast out, may be, into some noisome pit. The timbers and stones are leapt on to the hill again,—but my boy is not there!"

She wept, and wrung her withered hands.

"Hast thou any witness against these men?"

"Oh! my lord, they bribed me with their gifts that I

should suffer the boy to watch; and I am poor, and I thought he wore a charmed life, and the little hoard would be a comfort and a stay in my old age."

"Thou hast done wickedly in this," said the lord: "howbeit, I will keep them in the stocks; peradventure it may quicken the wits of their outdoor friends, to find out the mover of these scurvy pranks. The posts and timbers would not go up hill unless some knave had holpen to lift them."

Nicholas was departing to the indulgence of his favourite pastime, when a loud hubbub was heard without, and presently a fellow was pushed in by the pressure of the crowd upon his shoulders; but they drew back, on finding the immediate presence of their chief.

This man was accounted the most notorious idler in the neighbourhood, hight "Barnulf with the nose." His eyes looked red and swollen, and his senses had become muddled and obtuse with long steeping. Silence was immediately enforced, while the assembly anxiously awaited the interrogation of this intolerable coveter of barley-drink.

"Art thou again at thy freaks?" said the Thane, angrily: "thou hast soon forgotten the stocks and the whipping-post on Easter-day. It were well that Nicholas should refresh thy memory in this matter."

At this dreaded name, the poor wretch fell on his face.

"Please ye, my lord," said he, hardly raising his head from the floor, "I am here but for a witness beliken. I am breeding of no broil, save an' my gossip o' yesternight drew me into a tustle with old Split-Feet and his company."

He groaned, but not without considerable effort, and his face puckered in a heap at the recollection.

"What!—the foul fiend helped thee to thy liquor, I trow?" said Gamel, hastily.—"Think not to foist thy fooleries upon me. Should I find thee with a lie on thy tongue, the hide were as well off thy shoulders. To thy speech—quick, what sawest thou?"

"I will give it all, withouten a word but what the blessed saints would avouch," said the terrified supplicant, whose once fiery face was now blanched, or rather dyed of a dull and various blue.

"I was wending home from Merland, where I had been helping Dan the smith to his luckpenny, when, as I took the path-road down yonder unlucky hill to the ford, not thinking of the de'il's workmen that had flown off with the church the night before, I was whistling, or, it mayhap, singing,—or—or——I am not just particular to know how it was, for the matter of it; but, at any rate, I was getting up, having tumbled down the steep almost nigh to the bottom, and I thought my eyes had strucken fire, for I saw lights frisking and frolicking up and down the hill. Then I sat down to watch; and, sure enough, such a puck-fisted rabble, without cloak or hosen, I never beheld—all hurry-scurry up the hill, and some of the like were on the gallop down again. They were shouting, and mocking, and laughing, like so many stark-mad fools at a May-feast. They strid twenty paces at a jump, with burdens that two of the best oxen about the manor had not shifted the length of my thumb-nail. 'T is some unlucky dream, said I, rubbing the corners of my eyes, and trying to pinch myself awake. Just then I saw a crowd of the busiest of 'em running up from the river, and making directly towards the steep bank, below where I sat. They were hurrying a great log of timber,

which they threw down, close beside me, as if to rest ere they mounted. 'My friends,'—what should ail me to talk to 'em I cannot tell,—'My friends, but ye seem to have more work in your hands than wit in your noddles—ye might have spared yourselves the labour, I trow.' With that the whole rout turned upon me with a shout and a chattering that would have dumb-founded the shrillest tongue in the whole hundred—the mill-wheel was nothing to it. I would have escaped, but my feet were holden, like as they had been i' the stocks. One, the foremost of the crew,—I do think he had a long tail and gaping hoofs, but I was over-frightened to see very clear,—came with a mocking, malicious grin, his tongue lolling out, and his eyes glaring and fiend-like.

"'Pray, good friend,' said he, pulling off a little black bonnet, 'be compassionate enough to help us with our load to the hill-top.' Now was I terrified beyond measure, insomuch that I made a desperate tug, whereby, loosening myself, I ran like the wind, the wicked fiends following, and roaring after me with loud and bitter curses. I jumped into the river, in my hurry having missed the ford, and I heard 'em still shouting, and, as I thought, pursuing me; but the Virgin and St. Chadde were my helpers, for, when Biddy opened the door in the morning, I lay there in a great swoon, with my head bruised, and a hole in my good grey cloak."

"And so thou comest here a-boasting of thy drunken discoveries," said the Thane. "Thou shalt wish thou hadst not gotten thee so soon from the fiend's clutches. A spice of old Nicholas's vocation may not be amiss, yet, by way of relish to thy tale—"

The agony of the culprit was loud and appalling, but the chief was inexorable, until his denunciations were interrupted by a stranger, who craved a short respite for the groaning supplicant.

He was meanly clad:—a coarse cloak, stained and threadbare, was thrown open, showing a close habit of the most ordinary fabric; yet a natural and graceful bearing imparted a dignity even to his poor and worthless habiliments.

"I am a stranger, and sore oppressed with long travel. Penury and misfortune have been my lot, and I am driven from place to place without a home or a morsel of bread. Last night, long after the curfew, I came hither, but no *hospitium* or religious house being near, I sat down by the hill-side yonder, until morning should enable me to crave help for my hopeless journey. The morning had not dawned ere I awoke—a loud trampling, and the rush of many voices, had broken in upon my slumbers. I beheld crowds of strange-looking men, laden with terrific burdens. They seemed to be eagerly and earnestly at work, under heavier loads than I thought mortal man could sustain; the whole space, too, as far as the eye might carry, seemed alive with them, the flickering of their torches forming a scene of almost unimaginable splendour. "Right before me were a number of these labourers, hauling up a heavy beam from the river; others were apparently crossing, laden with materials no less bulky and intractable. All were in motion, wriggling along like so many ants on a hillock. The party just before me stayed immediately below where I sat, watching their proceedings with no little curiosity and amazement. They threw down their load,—then, pausing,

appeared to view, with some hesitation, the steep bank above them. The foremost of the group now came softly towards me. Pulling off his bonnet, with a grave and beseeching aspect he craved help to accomplish the ascent. Not then dreaming of goblins and their deceitful glamour, I put my shoulder to the work with a right good will, and truly it were a marvel to watch the tough beam, how it seemed to obey the impulse. I worked with all the might I could muster, but it appeared as though little were needful; and in a trice we scrambled to the top, when the whole party scampered off, leaving me to follow or not, as I chose. I saw something tossed towards me, which glistened as it lay at my feet. Stooping, I found a silver ring, beauteously bedecked with one glowing crystal. Round the rim is formed a quaint legend, bearing a fair device, which some learned clerk may perchance decipher."

The stranger drew from his finger a massy ring. A little ferret-eyed monk, a transcriber of saints' legends and Saxon chronicles, was immediately called. He pronounced the writing heathenish, and of the Runic form. A sort of free translation may be given as follows:—

"The Norman shall tread on the Saxon's heel,
And the stranger shall rule o'er England's weal;
Through castle and hall, by night or by day,
The stranger shall thrive for ever and aye;
But in Rached, above the rest,
The stranger shall thrive best."

Gamel was troubled and perplexed. The words were prophetic, evidently pointing to his own and his country's fate, as well as to the destiny of the stranger. He knit

his brows, and his very beard coiled upwards with the conflict. He appeared loth to allow of a supernatural agency in the affair, and yet the testimony and its witness were not to be gainsayed.

"I had not believed the tale, stranger, if this token had not confirmed thy speech:—verily thou hast a better witness than a fool's tongue to thy story. That ill-omened losel may depart. See thou fall not hastily into the like offence, else shalt thou smart from Childermas to All-hallowtide. Hence! to thy place." Barnulf awaited not farther dismissal, glad to escape the scrutiny of Nicholas with a whole skin.

A loud shriek was heard from the court-yard.

"My boy!—Oh, my boy!" cried the almost frantic mother, as she rushed into the chamber, leading in Uctred. He had been discovered on removing some of the huge piles of timber again from the hill, where, under a curiously-supported covering of beams and other rude materials, he lay, seemingly asleep. The urchin looked as malicious and froward as ever, even when standing before his chief.

"And where hast thou been, my pretty bird?" said the old woman, as she began her vocabulary of signs. But the boy looked surly, and would not answer to the signal: he drew down his black swarthy brows, looking eagerly and fiercely from behind their bushy curtains. Suddenly, and with a fearful yell, he sprang forward, snatching the ring which Gamel was then giving back to the stranger. With a wild and hideous laugh, which sent a shudder through the assembly, he drew it on his finger. At this moment the expression of his countenance began to change, and some of the bystanders, over whom

fear had probably waved the wand of the enchanter, saw his form dilate, and his whole figure expand into almost gigantic proportions. A thick haze rolled through the apartment,—then was heard a wild, unearthly shout,—and the vision had disappeared.

"Seize him!" cried Gamel.

The guards, trembling, prepared to execute his commands; but, on gaining the outworks of the castle, no vestige remained of his appearance, save a slight whirlwind of dust, like a mist-wreath curling down the valley, which, to their terrified apprehensions, became the chariot of the departing demon. 'Nothing could shake this belief; and, in after-ages, the boy was spoken of as a changling, left by some fairy, whose appointed sojourn had been then accomplished, the means for his release being fulfilled. Old Cicely became nigh crazed with the loss of her son; but Gamel, seriously pondering on these events, sought counsel from the "Holy Church." It was therein resolved, that the intended site should be removed, and the "*unknown*" by such removal appeased. The chapel of St. Chadde was accordingly built on the hill-top, where the church now stands, and unto which the foundations had been so marvellously conveyed. One hundred and twenty-four steps were dug to accomplish the ascent, and enable the good people to go to prayers. Connected with these, the tradition still exists; and unto this day it is here observed, that "*Strangers prosper in the town of Rochdale; but the natives are generally unfortunate in their undertakings.*"

MAB'S CROSS.

" A pilgrim came from o'er the sea ;
Benedicite ! benedicite !
And he brought a ring to that proud ladye.
His grave is wide, his grave is deep ;
On that bosom cold he shall quietly sleep :
Benedicite ! "

Drawn by S. Pickering

Engraved by Edwd Finden

MAIN'S CROSS, WIGAN.

London, Published by Longman & Co 1829.

MAB'S CROSS.

THE following extract from the genealogical roll of the Bradshaighs, is the principal source from whence this tale has originated:—

"Sir William Bradshaighe, 2d son to Sir John, was a "great traveller and a souldger, and married to Mabell, "daughter and sole heire of Hugh Norris de Haghe and "Blackrode, and had issue," &c.

Of this Mabel is a story by tradition of undoubted verity, "that in Sir Wm. Bradshage absence (beinge "10 years away in the holy wars), she married a Welsh "knight. Sir William, returning from the wars, came in "a palmer's habitt amongst the poor to Haghe, who, when "she saw and congetringe that he favoured her former "husband, wept, for which the knight chastised her; at "which Sir William went and made himself known to his "tenants; in which space the knight fled, but neare to "Newton Parke Sir William overtook him and sleu him. "The said Dame Mabell was enjoined by her confessor "to doe penances by going onest every week barefout and "bare legged to a crosse ner Wigan from the Haghe, "wilest she lived, and is called Mabb + to this day; "and ther monument lyes in Wigan church, as you see "them ther portry'd."

Sir William Bradshaigh was outlawed during the space of a year and a day for this offence; but he and his lady,

it is said, lived happily together afterwards until their death. Their effigies on the tomb now exist but as rude and unshapely masses; time and whitewash, the two great destroyers of our monumental relics, having almost obliterated their form; the one by diminishing, and the other by adding to, their substance.

That Sir William was at the "Holy Wars," must, it is evident, be a corruption of the story, seeing he was born about the year 1280, ten years after the last of these unfortunate expeditions. The first croisade was undertaken by Peter the Hermit, 1095; a second, by Louis VII. of France, 1145; a third, under Richard I. of England, 1190; a fourth, under Philip II. of France, 1204; a fifth, under Louis IX., against Egypt, 1248; and the last, under Louis IX., against Tunis, where he lost his life, 1270. Consequently, the perpetration of these "Holy" murders, which it is supposed were to the amount of two hundred millions of human beings, without the acquisition even of Jerusalem to the Church, must have ceased ere the birth of our "pilgrim." That he was at "the wars," however, is pretty certain; but they were nearer home. The machinations of that powerful noble, Thomas Earl of Lancaster, together with the disastrous campaign of Edward II. against the Scots, are sufficiently important events to account for the long absence of Sir William Bradshaigh, who is supposed to have been taken prisoner during these unhappy troubles.

Our engraving represents the cross as it exists at present. Some attention having been drawn to it of late, we may hope this interesting relic will be suffered to remain uninjured, and not be subjected any more to those levelling improvements for which this age is so distinguished.

MAB'S CROSS.

In the borough of Wigan, near one of the four gates, called Standishgate,—which gates are now removed, and their places occupied by some undignified-looking posts, called "toll-bars,"—stands a ruined stone cross; in appearance, by no means either interesting or remarkable: it would scarcely be noticed by a casual observer. Yet to this mean-looking memorial of our faith, is attached an eventful story, at which

"The sad might laugh; the merry weep!"

It is a tale, of which our brief limits will only allow a rapid sketch. This we have thrown together in the dramatic and narrative form, a combination more calculated than any other, we believe, to awaken attention, and bring forth the subject before the mind with truth and distinctness.

One stormy night, in the autumn of the year 1324, mine host of the Merry Maypole, a tavern of great resort, by the market-cross, in the good borough of Wigan, was awakened from a laborious slumber. The door, which opened into a low porch projecting from the thatch, was shaken with a vehemence that threatened some fearful catastrophe. Giles, no longer able to endure these thun-

dering appeals to his hospitality, desired his wife to ascertain the cause of the disturbance.

"Gramercy!—An' I be to unlatch for every graceless unthrift that chooses to pummel at Giles Dauber's wicket, I shall have but sorry bedding wi' an old husband."

"Old, quotha!—Old! I tell thee, dame, that I'm less by a good score of winters than Dan o' the higher Wient, when he wed old Simon's daughter.—Humph!—She was a merry and a buxom lass; but thou——"

How far this interesting dialogue between the tavern-keeper and his newly-wedded spouse might have extended, it is impossible with any degree of accuracy to set forth, inasmuch as another loud and desperate lunge, extenuated to an inaudible mutter the testy rejoinder of "Giles o' the Maypole;" this being the cognomen by which he was more familiarly designated.

"Anan!" shouted he; "what the ——. Save us!" he continued in a low whisper, crossing himself: "I had nigh slipped an ugly word over my tongue; and if it should be—Dame, I say—get up, and——"

"Nay, thou hast gotten thee two as nimble legs, by thine own reckoning, as any knave i' the borough. I shall e'en keep to my bed, goodman, though these guzzle-throats hammer till cock-crow.—They are at the right side of the door, I trow."

Now, mine host of the Merry Maypole having taken to himself that last and worst of all possible plagues for the remnant of his days, to wit, a young and somewhat handsome-looking wife, thought it no less meet than reasonable, and no less reasonable than a duty at all times incumbent, that the before-named helpmeet should, if need were, get out of bed and unlatch the wicket when-

ever good customers were astir; more particularly as the first Dame Dauber, having the fear of a short but tough cudgel upon her, did, at certain times and seasons, when there was the requisite occasion, leave her liege lord to the enjoyment of his warm and luxurious couch, and spread a table for the entertainment of many a night-betrayed traveller.

It was the first exigency of the kind, since the marriage of Giles Dauber to Madge Newsome of the Deer-cote, in which the discussion of a point so knotty and important had occurred. Giles dreamt not of the vast difference that exists in the nature and docility of divers women. He heard, with a sort of incredulous surprise, the first incipient grumblings, in contravention of his authority; but when these had fairly shaped themselves into open defiance, he started agape with wonder. Recovering himself, with a stern and portentous silence, he jumped out of bed, and drew on his doublet and hose. While thoughts of relentless import were brooding, he groped his way down the ladder that communicated with the lower apartment, for the purpose of ascertaining the quality and condition of the stranger. The latter still manifested a noisy impatience at being suffered, in so inhospitable a manner, to linger without. The night was rainy and tempestuous.—Giles shivered to the backbone as he trod on the wheezing rushes strewed over the floor; they were yet damp and dirty, by reason of the many visitors who had that night loitered long at the Merry Maypole.

"Holloa, friend!—thy name?" shouted Giles, placing his hand on the latch.

"Open the door, for the love of mercy!" cried a

strange voice. Giles drew back; he liked not this salutation—more by token from the adjurement being for the love of mercy, in lieu of an appeal to the tinkling angels that generally lined a traveller's pouch.

"Some sturdy beggar, or mendicant friar," thought he, "that knocks at my door because the chantry gates are shut.—I care not to open my door to every losel that knocks," cried he aloud.—"Hence! I know thee not."

"Goodman, give me a night's lodging, and I will reward thee"—the door flew open at this intimation—"with a palmer's benison," continued the stranger, advancing towards the wan embers that yet flickered on the hearth. Had Giles awaited the finishing of this sentence ere the latch was loosened, some other and more hospitable roof had enjoyed the benefit of that night's adventure.

"Thanks are not over meet for a cool stomach," growled the disappointed tapster; whilst his guest roused the decaying fagots into a faint and unsteady blaze.

Giles surveyed the new-comer with no very sanguine prepossessions in his behalf. The figure that met his scrutiny was clad in a dark cloak. The hood partly thrown back, shewed a somewhat "frosty poll," though the vivacity of a wild and restless eye, peering from under his dark and luxuriant brow, would scarcely have betokened an age at which the coming winter of life usually scatters these chill warnings of its approach. His features were finely moulded. A weather-beaten cheek, mingling with a complexion evidently sallow, gave a rich autumnal hue to his visage: a slight furrow, extending from the outer angle of the nostril around each corner of a narrow and retreating mouth, gave a careless

expression of scorn to the countenance, when at rest; but as he smiled, this sinister aspect disappeared, and the soft gleam of benevolence which succeeded, looked the brighter from the portentous scowl that had just passed. His beard was grey, and of a most reverend equipment, well calculated to excite veneration and respect. He was above the middle size: his humble garb but ill concealed a majesty of deportment indicating a disposition rather to command than to solicit favours. He seated himself on a low stool, and honest Giles, whose courage did not feel sufficiently invigorated, in the presence of this proud palmer, to dare an open warfare, began hostilities covertly, in manner as follows:—

"What ails ye, to disturb honest folks i' their beds at these hours? You might ha' tarried in your last baiting-place—at any rate, till the kye were astir. I wonder the guard let you pass at the gate. But since these evil days have o'ershadowed the land, every braggart has license to do as he list; and the monks and the friars, with their whole crew of dubs and deputies, are the worst of all. Old Cliderhow here, the parson, thought to have waged war with his betters; but he was a slight matter mistaken: we whipt him up by the heels for his treason."

"Is Cliderhow alive?" enquired the stranger.

"Save us, pilgrim! where had you knowledge of the traitor?"

"Our good king Edward," continued the guest, apparently not attending to Giles's question in reply, "is still sorely beset with his enemies. Had a score of knaves, such as Master Cliderhow, been hanged long ago, his reign had been less burthensome both to prince and people."

"It's twelve years—ay, twelve," said Giles, reckoning

the lapse on his fingers;—"I know it by the great wind that beat down Master Markland's barn wall at the Meadows, since Cliderhow's sermon, inciting the whole parish to rebellion."

"I know it," replied the palmer: "he was in prison when I last knew of the matter."

"Ay, ay," returned Giles, knowingly; "but threescore marks, disbursed discreetly to our good and loyal burgesses, made the doors as easy to open as my wicket,—that is, at timely hours, ye understand."

"Is he at large?" enquired the other.

"They say he bides at Haigh," answered Boniface, "roistering it with that Welsh knight there, Sir Osmund Neville. I warrant Sir William's substance runs gaily down the old parson's throat."

Here the palmer threw the hood over his brows. Suddenly he arose: striding across the chamber with considerable speed, he twice repeated the name of Sir Osmund Neville in a subdued tone, but with a bitterness of spirit that ill accorded with the outward habit of meekness which he had assumed.

"Giles Dauber! what keeps ye so long there a gossiping?" shouted a shrill voice from above. It was the vocal substitute of Mistress Dauber, who, resolutely determined not to budge at her husband's bidding, had, as she lay, listened, but to little purpose. Finding it was no every-day guest, she crept to the ladder head, and gave ear for a while; but soon discovering it to be an unthrifty sort of intercourse that was going on, not likely to bring either gain or good will to the house, and fearing that Giles might fall into some snare from his ready-mouthed opinions regarding the unsettled temper and aspect of the

time, she thought fit to break abruptly on the discourse, ere it should lead to some dangerous or forbidden subject. He had, however, hit upon a favourite topic; in addition to which, he was now evidently loth to leave his guest ere he had learnt the nature of his errand to these parts. An "o'er-sea pilgrim," as they were generally styled, was too choice an arrival for a petty hostel,—especially in those times, when newspapers and posts were not circulating daily and hourly through the land,—to let slip an opportunity of enquiring about the king of Scotland, as Robert Bruce was then called, or about his majesty, the Sultan Solyman — two personages who were very frequently confounded with each other in mine host's political hemisphere, and whose realms formed the great pandemonium whence issued all that was dire and disastrous to plague and perplex unhappy England.

"To bed! to bed!—Thou art ready enough to rise when thou art not bidden.—To bed, I say!" angrily shouted the disturbed Benedict.

"Hast *thou* a wife?" sternly enquired the pilgrim.

"A wife!—marry have I!" exclaimed Giles—"and here she comes."

Finding there was no likelihood of a speedy termination to this interview, our hostess of the May-pole conceived it to be a matter of duty, that she should, at least, take her full share in the discussions and disclosures that might ensue. For this purpose, she descended, making a deep acknowledgment to the generally-supposed sanctity of the pilgrim's vocation. So much occupied, however, did he appear by other concernments, that he scarcely noticed her approach, but continued to pace with hasty and irregular steps across the chamber.

"By what quality or appearance may Sir Osmund Neville be distinguished?" he abruptly enquired.

"A right goodly person, and a brave gentleman! He gave me a sousing kiss, and a pair of mittens to boot, the last choosing of knights to the parliament," said the Dame.

"Hold thy tongue, Madge!" angrily exclaimed Giles. "Good father, heed not a woman; they are caught by the lip and the fist, like my lord's trencher-man. This Sir Osmund is both lean and ill-favoured. I wonder what the Lady Mabel saw above his shoe, to wed with an ugly toad spawned i' the Welsh marshes. Had ye seen her first husband, Sir William Bradshaigh,—rest his soul! he was killed in the wars,—you would have marvelled that she drunk the scum after the broth."

"Lady Mabel and Sir Osmund are now at Haigh?" cautiously enquired the palmer.

"You have business there, belike?" sharply interrogated the indefatigable host.

"I have slight matters that require my presence at the hall. Does the knight go much abroad, or keeps he close house?"

"Why, look ye, it is some three months or so, since I smelt the fat from her ladyship's kitchen. Dan Hardseg smutted my face, and rubbed a platterful of barley-dough into my poll, the last peep I had through the buttery. I 'll bide about my own hearth-flag whilst that limb o' the old spit is chief servitor. I do bethink me, though, it is long sin' Sir Osmund was seen i' the borough. Belike he may have come at the knowledge of my misadventure, and careth not to meet the wrath of a patient man."

Here the malicious Dame burst into a giddy laugh.

"Thee! why Sir Osmund knoweth not thy crop from thy crupper, nor careth he if thy whole carcass were crammed into the dumpling-bag. I'feck, it were a rare pastime to see Sir Osmund, the brave Welsh knight, give the gutter to Giles of the Merry May-pole."

Giles was speechless with dismay at this aggravating insult; but the Dame continued:—

"I think, good stranger, the knight does keep house of late. Grim told me that last week he was a-sporting once only, by way of the higher park; and he appears something more soured and moody than usual. If thou crave speech with him though, to-morrow being almous-day at the hall, the poor have free admission, and thou mayest have a sight of him there: peradventure, as thou art strange in these parts, it will be needful thou hadst a guide."

"And just ready for the job thyself, I'se warrant," bitterly snarled the exasperated husband. The storm, long threatening, was about to burst forth; but the palmer, with holy and beseeching words, soothed for awhile the angry disputants, at the same time intimating that a guide was unnecessary, the situation of the house being sufficiently obvious from whatever quarter he might direct his steps.

The stranger seemed not solicitous of repose, and Giles was too sulky to enquire his wants. The Dame, however, drew a bundle of clean straw from a huge heap, and threw it beside the hearth. A coarse and heavy rug, over which was thrown a sheep-skin with the wool innermost, constituted a warm but homely couch. A horn cup filled with cider, and a burnt barley-cake, were next exhibited, of which the palmer made a healthful if not a sumptuous

repast. Giles growled off to the loft above; and the Dame, caring little for the sequel of her husband's humours, soon found a resting-place by his side.

Morning shone brightly and cheerfully through the chinks and crevices of both door and lattice; but the pilgrim's couch was yet unsought. His vigils had been undisturbed, save when the baying of some vagrant and ill-disciplined dogs, or the lusty carol of some valiant yeoman reeling home after a noisy debauch, startled him from a painfully-recurring thought, to which, however, the mind involuntarily turned when the interruption had ceased.

It was late ere Giles awoke: breathless with expectation, he hastened below, anticipating a rich budget of news from his guest; but he had departed.

It was one of those fresh and glittering mornings which autumn alone can produce. Keen, pure, and exhilarating, the air seemed all buoyant and elastic, tinging the cheeks with ruddy health, and animating the whole frame with renewed vigour.

A slight hoar-frost yet lay on the thatched roofs. Calm and undisturbed, a gem-like brightness twinkled from every object; whilst the vapour that covered them looked not as the shroud, but rather as a pure mantle of eider, hiding the fair bosom to which it clung.

The pilgrim entered a narrow street leading to the postern or gate, called Standish-gate. In those days it was not, as now, a wide and free thoroughfare for man and beast. At the accustomed fairs, toll is, to this time, demanded on all cattle changing owners at the several outlets, where formerly stood four gates; to wit, Wall-gate, Hall-gate, Mill-gate, and Standish-gate. Each gate, where

the toll-bars now stand, was once, in good sooth, a heavy barrier of stout beams, thickly studded with iron. Through the night they were generally bolted, and guarded by a company of the mayor's halberdiers. An irregular wall encompassed the town, save on the eastern side, where the river Duglas seemed, in the eyes of the burghers, to constitute a sufficient defence, a low abbatis only screening its banks. The walls were covered, or rather uncovered, by a broad ditch: a bridge of rough-hewn planks, at three of the entrances before named, allowed a free communication with the suburbs, except during seasons of hostility, which unhappily were not rare in those days of rapine and rebellion. Before the Mill-gate, a wider and more substantial structure, mounted on huge wooden props, facilitated a passage over the river. This edifice could be raised in cases of siege, effectually separating the inhabitants from their enemies.

The first beams of the sun began to peep through the angles of the wooden gable fronts, projecting nearly midway across the street, streaming athwart the frosty air, and giving a beautifully variegated and picturesque appearance to the grotesque vista, bounded by the Standish-gate.

The stranger paused not; mounting the hill with an alertness and agility that scarcely seemed compatible with his age and appearance. On arriving at the gate, his garb was a sufficient passport, without the necessity of a challenge. Three or four of the guards were loitering and laughing on a couple of benches built in a sort of arched recess on each side of the gateway. As the pilgrim passed they became silent, bowing reverently as he pronounced the accustomed benison.

Outside the barriers, the road lay through an open and uninclosed country. It was a matter of but slight moment what line of direction the narrow and uneven pathways might describe, provided their termination was tolerably accurate; all traffic and intercourse, being necessarily limited, was mostly carried on through the medium of saddles and horse-furniture.

The most inaccessible part of a hill was the site generally chosen; the road ascending and descending in a meandering sort of zig-zag on its side. Rarely did our timid ancestors tempt the valley, often preferring a round-about course over a line of hills, if by so doing the perils of the lower ground could be avoided.

The pilgrim followed a narrow and beaten track: it was bordered on each side by a deep ditch, nearly overgrown with weeds and brambles. He traversed the intricate windings of the road with considerable facility; but an hour had nearly elapsed ere he gained the brow of an eminence, of no very conspicuous height, though it commanded a pretty extensive view of the country adjacent. From the east, a rich flood of glory blended the whole into one broad mass of light, melting away the beauteous frost-work, as the rays of morning dissipate the unreal visions that have their existence only in darkness and repose. Southward lay the borough, distinguishable only by the broad tower of All-Saints rising from the mist, as if baseless and suspended. A bell boomed heavily through the quiet atmosphere: its long and lingering echoes came on the pilgrim's soul, like the voice of other years—of hopes and anticipations that had for ever departed.

Westward might be seen a curl of blue smoke from the

newly-dignified priory at Upholland, recently invested with that honour, through the grants and intercessions of Sir Robert de Holland, a proud knight in the train of Thomas Earl of Lancaster. It was northward that the pilgrim turned, with a look of more intense anxiety. The mansion of Haigh stood at the extremity of a broad slope, surmounted by shady woods, now fading into the warm and luxuriant tints of autumn. Dark and cumbrous turrets, projecting from the wings, grimly caught the first gleam of the morning; whilst a tower of considerable strength and elevation rose above what could only be surmised as the principal gateway. It was apparently designed to overlook the whole fabric, serving as a refuge to the besieged, and a stronghold in case of attack. Narrow loopholes might be traced, irregularly disposed in the heavy masonry; and at the summit stood a small turret resembling a large chair, from which, at stated occasions, waved the richly-emblazoned escutcheon of the Norris and the Bradshaigh. The staff was just visible, but unaccompanied by its glittering adjunct. It was this circumstance, principally, that seemed to engage the attention of the stranger. He broke into a loud and involuntary exclamation:—

"Sir William's birth-day is forgotten! That staff opened a rich blossom to the breeze ten years agone. It is the day—the very hour of Sir William's birth!"

He smote his forehead, scarcely able to contain the violence of his emotion.

"Let that day darken!—let it be cursed with storms and tempest!—let the shadows of death brood over it, and the teeming night bring tenfold horrors! Yet how calm, how peacefully yonder sun approaches in his strength!—

Nature is the same—bright, joyous, and unchanging!—Man, man alone, is mutable—his days are full of mourning and bitterness!"

He bowed his head, crouching almost to the dust, in that overwhelming agony.

Suddenly he was aroused, and in a manner as unceremonious as unexpected. A smart blow on the back announced a somewhat uncourteous intruder, whilst a loud and discordant laugh struck shrilly on his ear. Starting, he beheld a figure of a low and unshapely stature, clothed in a light dress, fantastically wrought. A round cap, slouched in front, fitted closely to his head, from which depended what the wearer, no doubt, looked upon as a goodly aggregate of ornaments. These consisted of ear-tassels and rings of various dimensions, that jingled oddly as he twisted his head from side to side with a knowing and important grin. A pair of large leathern boots—slipped on for travelling purposes, with ample flaps turning down from the knee—formed the lower costume of this strange being. Round his neck he wore an iron collar: its import, whether in the shape of punishment or decoration, is at this time doubtful. A visage of more than ordinary size, projected from between a pair of shoulders that nearly overlooked the lower rim of his cap. A sort of dubious leer was its predominant expression, heightened, ever and anon, by a broad laugh, the eldritch shout of which first announced itself to the ear of the pilgrim. Matted and shaggy, the twisted locks hung wildly about his brow, whilst a short and frizzled beard served as a scanty covering to his chin. A "Sheffield whittle" stuck in his baldric; and in a pouch was deposited the remnant of a magnificent pasty. From oft and over

replenishment, this receptacle gaped in a most unseemly manner, showing the shattered remains, the crumbling fragments, of many a huge mountain of crust.

With arms akimbo stood this prepossessing personage before the pilgrim, in all his native rudeness and disorder. The latter tightened his cloak about him, and withdrew some three or four paces from his companion.

"Nuncle," said the jester—for such was in fact his vocation—"I wonder for what property master keeps a fool?—I bethink me 't is for his wit: more wit and less honesty, though." The palmer was silent.

"Art going to the hall?" continued he. "The fool is whipt there for being honest. Have a care, nuncle; if Sir Osmund catch thee, thou hadst as good bequeath thy bones to the pope to make into saints' gear.—I'm very sad, nuncle!"

"Sad!" said the pilgrim; "in good troth, an' thou be sad, the cock of the hall yonder is but in sorry plight."

"'T is more wholesome to cry to-day," said the dolorous knave, "knowing ye shall laugh to-morrow, than to laugh to-day, and to-morrow's dool somehow making your mirth asthmatic.

> "Be merry to-morrow; to-day, to-day
> Your belly-full fill of grief;
> When sorrow hath supped, go play, go play,
> For mirth I wot is brief.

"Ay, grandam, ye are wise; and an old woman's wit best becomes a fool:

> "When sorrow hath supped, go play, go play,
> For mirth I wot is brief."

He drew out the last notes into one of those querulous cadences, much in vogue as an *ad libitum* on all fitting occasions: even the sad features of the pilgrim were provoked into a smile.

"Art bound for the hall?" again enquired the inquisitive hunchback.

"Yes, friend—whither else? Is it not almous-day, and thinkest thou the houseless and wandering pilgrim will not share of the largess?"

"Beggars and friars thrive,—treason and corruption wed, and these be their children belike. Hast brought the Lady Mabel her old husband's bones from heathenrie?—her new one is like to leave her nought else, poor soul, for her comfort. She'll make her up a saint out o' them."

"If she has gotten another husband," said the pilgrim, "the old one's bones would have a rare chance of her worship."

The facetious impertinent here gave a sort of incredulous whistle. He eyed the palmer with a keen and scrutinizing glance, but suddenly relapsing into his accustomed manner, he burst into a wild and portentous laugh.

"I tell thee, if Sir Osmund catch thee carrying so much as a thumb-nail of Sir William's carcass, he'll wring thy neck as wry as the chapel weather-cock. My lady goes nigh crazed with his ill humours. I warrant thee, Sir William's ghost gaily snuffs up the sport. I have watched him up and down the old stairs, and once i' the chapel; and he told me"—whispering close to the pilgrim's ear—"a great secret, nuncle!"

"Ay—what was that, Motley?"

"Why, said he, if so be Sir William comes home again, he'll find his wife has got a cuckoo in her nest." Here he burst from the stranger with a malicious shout, and descending a by-path, was soon lost amidst the intricacies of a deep wood, skirting the verge of an extensive forest.

The traveller's brow gathered a heavier gloom. With unconscious haste he soon gained a gentle ascent, which led by a narrow and deep path to the mansion. Nigh to the bridge over the moat stood a blacksmith's hovel, conveniently situated for all job-work emanating from the armoury and the kitchen, which at that time afforded full exercise for the musical propensities of Darby Grimshaw's great anvil. This hut was a general resort to all the idlers in the vicinity: Grim, as he was generally styled for the sake of abbreviation, discharging the office of "preses," or chief moderator, in all debates held therein. He was a shrewd fellow and a bold one. A humorous and inquisitive cunning lurked in the corner of his grey and restless eye. His curiosity was insatiable; and as a cross-questioner, when fairly at work, for worming out a secret, he had not his fellow. His brain was a general deposit for odd scraps, and a reservoir in which flowed all stray news about the country. He was an abstract and chronicle of the time; and could tell ye where the Earl of Lancaster mustered his forces, the day of their march, and the very purposes and projects of that turbulent noble. Even the secrets of my lady's bower did not elude the prying of this indefatigable artist; at any rate, he had the credit of knowing all that he assumed, which amounted very much to the same thing as though his knowledge were unlimited: a nod and a

wink supplying the place of intelligence, when his wondering neophytes grew disagreeably minute in their enquiries.

Towards this abode did the pilgrim bend his steps. A thick smoke hovered about the thatch, that appeared very ingeniously adapted for the reception and nurture of any stray spark that might happen to find there a temporary lodgment. Several times had this Vulcan been burnt out, yet the materials were easily replaced; and again and again the hovel arose in all its pristine ugliness and disorder.

Darby was just kindling his fire: a merry-making overnight had trenched upon morning duties, and daylight found him still stretched on his pallet. Subsequent to this a noisy troop from the hall had roused him from a profound slumber.

"St. George and the Virgin protect thee, honest friend!" said the pilgrim, as he stood by an opening, just then performing the functions of both door and chimney.—Darby's perceptions being much impeded by the smoke, he hastily approached the door. His surprise manifested itself aloud; yet did he not forget a becoming reverence to the stranger, as he invited him into the only apartment, besides his workshop, of which the roof could boast. It served for parlour, bedchamber, and kitchen; where the presiding deity, Grim's helpmate, carried on her multifarious operations.

The officious housewife fetched a joint-stool, first clearing it from dust, whilst her husband added a billet to the heap. She was just preparing breakfast. A wooden porringer, filled to the brim with new milk, in which oatmeal was stirred, a rasher of salted mutton, and a

large cake of coarse bread, comprised the delicacies of their morning repast. To this, however, was added a snatch of cold venison from the hall. "But this, you see," said the old woman, "is not of our own killing; St. Gregory forbid!—it comes from Dan there, who has the care of the knight's buttery."

"Rot him for a churl!" said the smith; "Sir Osmund grudges every mouth about him; but"—and here he looked wondrous knowing—"he may happen to be ousted yet, if Earl Thomas should come by the worst in this cabal."

"Sir Osmund, I find, is no favourite with his neighbours."

"Hang him!" replied Grim, first looking cautiously into the shop; "there's not a man of us but would like to see him and his countrymen packed off to-morrow upon ass-panniers. They were spawned from the Welsh ditches to help that overgrown Earl against his master. If Sir William had been alive, I had spoken out without fear. He was a loyal knight and a true—he ever served his country and his king. But I bethink me, that peradventure ye may have heard of our late master's death; and who knows but ye bring some token, pilgrim, to his lady?"

"Thou hast shrewdly guessed—I bear the last message that Sir William sent to his lady: thinkest thou it may be delivered without the knight's privity?"

"Save thee, father! peril betides him who would hazard a message to my lady without her husband's leave."

"Is the Lady Mabel in health?—and the children?" enquired the stranger.

"Sorely did she grieve when tidings came of Sir

William's death in the great battle; but sorer still rues she her wedding with Sir Osmund Neville. Poor soul! it would melt the nails out of a rusty horse-shoe to see how she moans herself, when she can steal privily to her chamber. They say the knight caught her weeping, once, over some token that belonged to Sir William, and he burnt it before her face, ill-treating her into the bargain."

"How came she to wed this churl?"

"Oh, it's a sorry history!"—The speaker paused, and it was at the pilgrim's entreaty that he thus continued:

"Parson Cliderhow had his paw in the mischief. She was in a manner forced either to wed, or, in the end, to have found herself and her children with never a roof-tree above their heads."

"How?—Sir William did not leave her portionless?"

"I know not; but Sir Osmund had, or pretended he had, got a grant from the Earl of Lancaster for possession of all that belonged to Sir William, as a reward for his great services; and unless she wed him—why, you may guess what follows, when a lone woman is left in a wooer's clutches. I shall never forget their wedding-day; it should rather have been her burying, by the look on't. Her long veil was more like a winding-sheet than a bride's wimple."

During this recital, the palmer drew his seat closer to the hearth. He leant him over his staff, absorbed in that conscious stupor which seems at once shut out from all connexion with external objects, and yet intensely alive to their impressions. Suddenly he rose, tightened his sandals, and looking round, appeared as if about to depart.

"It is our late master's birth-day," said the loquacious informant: "ten years ago there was free commons at the hall for man and beast. Now, save on almous-days, when some half-dozen doitering old bodies get a snatch at the broken meat, not a man of us thrusts his nose into the knight's buttery but by stealth. Sir William's banner has not been hoisted, as it was wont on this day, since he left, with fifty armed men in his train, to help the king, then hard pressed in the Scottish wars. Ye may get an alms among the poor to-day, but have an eye to the Welsh bowmen: these be the knight's privy-guard, and hold not the quality of his guests in much respect."

Here the smith's angry garrulity was interrupted by Daniel Hardseg, a sort of deputy house-steward, whose duty it was to look after all business not immediately connecting itself with any other department in the household. He was prime executive in most of the out-door duty, and a particular crony at the hovel. His "Holloa!" was terrific.

"Why, a murrain to thee, goodman Grim, thy fire is colder than my halidome; the sun is so high, it puts it out, I reckon. Here have I two iron pots, a plate from my master's best greaves, and a pair of spurs that want piecing, and I'm like to tinker them as I list on a cold stithy—Get out, thou —" Here he became aware of an additional inmate to Grim's dwelling; and this discovery, for a while, checked the copious torrent of Dan's eloquence. Shortly, Darby drew him aside, and from their looks it might be gathered that some scheme was negotiating for the pilgrim's safe admission at the hall. To an entreaty, more strenuously urged on the part of our diplomatist, Dan replied in a louder tone,

"Why, look thee, gossip, it were as much as my lugs were worth—but—I 'll e'en try."

"We shall hear some news about Sir William, depend on 't, an' thou get him a word with my lady."

"And what the better shall I be of that?—dead men make no porridge hot," simply retorted Dan.

"Go to," replied the other; "it 's but setting Maude on the scent—I warrant thee, she 'll sharpen her wits for the work. It will be a grievous pity should he depart, and whisper not his message to her ladyship. Maude's thin ears, as thou knowest, can catch a whisper, and thou wilt soon squeeze the secret out of her; then comes Darby's turn—by to-morrow, at the latest."

The news-doting artisan rubbed his dark fists with ecstasy. "Go, knave," said he; "thou art a teasing little varlet."

Here Grim seemed ready to hug his comrade in the extremity of his delight; but Dan was rather sullen, evidently ruminating on peril and mischance, wherein the tempter had no share, though participating in the profits of the adventure. Eventually, the stranger was placed under the patronage of Daniel Hardseg, who, to do him justice, was well affected towards the enterprise he had undertaken.

Passing by a low wall, to the north-east of the mansion, they were soon hidden by a projecting terrace or platform, which, in cases of siege, could be converted into a sort of breast-work to cover the sallies of the besieged. At the salient angle of this curtain stood a small postern, to which Dan applied a heavy key, and beckoning to his companion, they ascended a narrow stair-case. A succession of dark passages led to the great hall, from which

a small arched door-way communicated by a private entrance to the chapel. As they passed the half-closed door, a gruff voice was heard reciting the appointed service for the day. Dan stept cautiously by, and motioned the stranger to tread softly. The latter paused, listening with a look of anxiety, and pressed his staff across his bosom;—soon, drawing his hood closer over his brow, he quickly followed the retreating footsteps of his companion.

"Praised be old Cliderhow's tough pipe!" said Dan, when fairly out of hearing. "Ha, ha!—sit down, sit down, good father"—opening a half-door, as he laughed, and thrusting in the pilgrim—"nobody can hear aught besides, when he's fairly agoing."

The apartment into which this unceremonious conductor ushered his guest, was Dan's store-room.

A most whimsical assemblage of materials were here huddled together. Pans, wooden bowls, and matters of meaner import, entered into close familiarity with broadswords and helmets; boots of home manufacture in their primitive clothing; saddles, with their housings; knives, and brown bottles of coarse pottery, were intermingled with many a grim-looking weapon of blood-thirsty aspect. From the walls depended a heterogeneous mass of apparel,—cloaks, hats, and body-gear, of unimaginable shape and appearance. Dan was steward of the wardrobe, or furniture-keeper, to most of the retainers and other idle appendages to the hall; and as, in those days, the sciences dependent on order and classification had not spread their beneficial influence through society at large, it frequently happened that more time was consumed in rummaging amidst this unexplored chaos, than would

have sufficed to transact the whole affair for which any article was required. A round stool in the middle of this "*Thesaurus*"—the only unoccupied place except the ceiling—was the throne of our friend, Dan Hardseg, when dispensing out his treasures with stately munificence; —on this scanty perch was the stranger duly installed, and favoured with a benignant and knowing wink from Dan as he departed.

Waiting for the return of his patron, the pilgrim was roused from a fit of reverie by the well remembered greeting of the jester, Humphry Lathom, or "Daft Humpy," as he was mostly called.

"Eh, nuncle!—But if Dan catch thee, he'll be sure to give thee a lift i' the stocks."

This strange creature cautiously opened the door, and was speedily engulfed in all that fearful accumulation of sloth and disorder. By his manner, it did not seem to be his first irruption into this vast magazine; whilst, from the cautious and fearful glances he from time to time cast through the door, it would appear that he had been detected in his expeditions, and, in all probability, punished for the offence. He was evidently in search of some object from amidst the various heaps of lumber he overthrew; an inarticulate mutter, accompanying every fresh attack, indicated impatience and disappointment. Suddenly he exclaimed, drawing forth a large roll, with ludicrous expressions of delight—

"I have thee, now!—The buck's horns shall soon butt this great Welsh goat from his pen."

He opened the banner. It was the pennon of the Braidshaigh, thrown aside to rot in dust and decay.

"Don't tell Dan, nuncle, and thou shalt see rare sport." He said this with his usual familiarity of tone; but suddenly putting his mouth to the stranger's ear, he whispered.—The words were inaudible, save to him for whom they were meant; and in an instant he darted from the spot, concealing the spoil amidst the folds of his apparel. Shortly afterwards Dan made his appearance. With wonder and dismay did he behold the ravages committed in his treasure-house,—"confusion worse confounded."

"Beshrew me, but thou art a restless tenant. I did not tell thee to tumble my wardrobe into haycocks."

"I was long a-watching," said the pilgrim; "and, in good troth, I became over-curious to know the capacity of thy sty. What tidings from my lady's chamber?"

"A plague on her husband's humours!—Maude says, it were as much as a Jew's thumb were worth to get thee privily to an audience, but she hath urged my lady to distribute the alms herself to-day: so betake thee to the kitchen; Maude will contrive thou shalt have some token of her approach. St. Anthony! but thou hast bestirred thee bravely; such another guest, and I might as well set fire to the whole budget. If thou be'st bent on such another rummage in the kitchen, the cook will whack thy pate with the spit,—holy and hooded though it be."

Dan led the way to this arena of gigantic gastronomy. It was a vast and smoky den, such as could only exist in those days of feudal magnificence. An immense furnace was fed by huge blocks of wood, which the ravening flame seized, and in a moment enveloped in its embrace. Forms, grisly and indistinct, flitted past this devouring

blaze, by the sputtering and crackling of which, mingled with the hissing delicacies before it, and the shrill scream of the presiding fury, a stranger might be warned of his approach to this pandemonium some time ere its wonders were visible. The pilgrim seated himself in an accessible corner, anxiously awaiting the promised signal.

On a long stone bench lay heaps of broken meat, ready for distribution to the groups of mendicants, who were now clamouring without the gate. From the low and ponderous rafters hung dried mutton, bacon, and deer's tongues, wreathed in curls of smoke, that might seem to render an introduction to the chimney unnecessary for completing their flavour.

It was not long ere a pert waiting-maid approached. She drew up her short linsey-woolsey garments from the contaminations beneath her feet. Raising her chin, she thus addressed the servitors:—

"My lady bids ye bring the dole quickly into the great hall.—She attends to-day in person. When the bell rings." looking towards the pilgrim as she spoke, "my lady leaves her chamber."

Maude departed with the same supercilious deportment. The bell was immediately heard, and the stranger, making the best of his way into the hall, found the doors wide open, and an indiscriminate assemblage of supplicants, displaying, to the best advantage, a variety of modes and manifestations of distress, unhappily not confined to those unhallowed days of wretchedness and misrule. Their chief attention seemed to be directed towards a side wicket, in the upper part of which was a slide for the more convenient distribution of the accustomed largess

when the lady Mabel did not superintend the apportioning of her beneficence.

It was soon whispered amongst the crowd, that she, who had for a considerable time kept aloof from all intercourse, would that day distribute her own bounty.

The tinkling of the bell ceased, and suddenly the door flew open. Lady Mabel and her maidens entered. The crowd fell back as she approached. Of a commanding form and deportment, she seemed a being of some superior creation; whilst, with slow and majestic steps, she passed on to the upper division of the hall, where the dais raised her slightly above the multitude.

She was habited in deep mourning: her heavy train swept gracefully over the dark pavement; her veil, in cumbrous folds, reached almost to her feet, effectually concealing her face from the eyes of the spectators. A number of servitors now entered, bearing the allotted viands, together with sundry articles of winter apparel. The upper table was filled, and a profound silence showed the awe and respect which her presence inspired. She raised her veil. Grief, long subdued, yet deep and irremediable, hung heavily on her pallid features, but their form and character was untouched by the destroyer. Not a ringlet was visible. Her brow, bare and unornamented, threw an air of severe grandeur on her whole countenance. Around the lip fell a deeper shade of sorrow; but sweet, inexpressibly sweet and touching was the expression. Though the rose had faded, yet, lovelier in decay, it seemed to mingle more gracefully with the soft hues by which it was surrounded.

She waved her hand: singly the mendicants approached, proffering their simple tale of suffering and privation.

To every one she administered comfort; consoling the wretched, and reproving the careless: but each had a share of her bounty ere he withdrew.

The hall was nearly cleared; yet the palmer sat, as if still awaiting audience, behind a distant pillar, and deeply pondering, as it might seem, the transactions he had witnessed. The last of their suppliants had departed ere he rose, bending lowly as he approached. The eye of the noble dame suddenly became riveted on him. She was leaning in front of her maidens, beside a richly-carved canopy of state, underneath which, in days of feudal hospitality and pomp, presided the master of the banquet. Behind, a long and richly-variegated window poured down a chequered halo of glory around her form. She seemed an angel of light, issuing from that fountain of splendour, and irradiating the whole group with her presence.

"Reverend pilgrim, thy behest?" She said this with a shudder of apprehension, as if dreading an answer to her enquiry. The pilgrim spoke not, but advanced.

The attendants drew aside. A silence, chill and unbroken as the grave, pervaded the assembly. He took from his vest a silver ring. The lady Mabel grasped the well-known signet. With agony the most heart-rending and intense, she exclaimed:—

"My husband's signet!—Where?—whence came this pledge?—Speak!—"

A pause ensued.—It was one of those short ages of almost insupportable suspense, when the mind, wound up to the keenest susceptibility of endurance, seems vibrating on the verge of annihilation,—as if the next pulse would snap its connexion with the world for ever.

"Lady," the pilgrim answered, in a low sepulchral tone, "it is a bequest from thy husband. It was his wife's last pledge,—a seal of unchanging fidelity.—He bade me seek his dame, and say, 'His last sigh was to her,—his last wish to heaven.'"

Lady Mabel listened—every tone sunk like a barbed arrow to her heart. The voice resembled not that of her deceased husband, yet such was the deceptive influence arising from the painful irritation which her spirits had undergone, that, if reason had not forbidden, her fancy would have invested it with supernatural attributes; listening to it as though it were a voice from the tomb.

"For the love I bore and yet bear to his most honoured name, tell me, I conjure thee tell me, his earthly resting-place. My last pilgrimage shall be thither. I will enshrine his hallowed relics, and they shall be a pledge of our union where we shall no more part."

The last words were spoken with a solemnity of expression awful and thrilling beyond the power of language to convey.

"What recks it, lady? thou hast gotten thee another," said the pilgrim.

"Another!—O name him not. Never, never!—Most base, most cruel. He took advantage of my bereavement,—a moment of weakness and maternal terror,—by what long ages of suffering and wretchedness has it been repaid! Better I had beheld my babes wasting with hunger, than have mated with this unpitying husband for a home and a morsel of bread!"

A flush of proud scorn at her own weakness overspread her features. It was but momentary. She bade the attendants withdraw. Looking round for this purpose, she was

aware, for the first time, of the hated presence of Roger de Cliderhow, watching, with considerable surprise, for the result of this unexpected interview. He departed with the retinue, leaving Lady Mabel and the pilgrim for a while unobserved.

"Thou art a holy and a heaven-destined man, yet surely thou hast been taught to share another's sorrows,—to pour the oil of compassion over the wounds of the penitent and broken-hearted." The lady turned aside her head,—she leaned over the chair for support, whilst one hand pressed her throbbing temples.

"*Mabel Bradshaigh!*" It was the voice of Sir William. She started as at a summons from the tomb. No other form was visible but that of the pilgrim bending over his staff. Her eye wandered wildly around the hall, as if she expected some phantom to start from its recesses. A richly-fretted screen, behind which the minstrels and lookers-on occasionally sat at the festival, stood at the lower end of the apartment. A slight rustling was heard; she was about to rush towards the spot, when the voice was again audible, and apparently at her side. Slowly the hood of the pilgrim was uplifted. He threw off his disguise;—but O, how changed was the once athletic form of Sir William Bradshaigh! With a wild and piercing shriek she flew towards the out-stretched arms of her husband; but ere they met, a figure stepped between, barring their approach. It was the ungainly person of Sir Osmund Neville.

"Nay, nay, seek thy leman elsewhere, thou gay palmer. It were a brave honour, truly, to graft me with thy favours." With this brutish speech he was proceeding to

lay hands on the lady, who stood stupified in amaze, and bereft of power to offer the least resistance.

"To me this insult! I'll chase thee from thy lair!" exclaimed the incensed Sir William.

Roger de Cliderhow at this moment suddenly approached, and in great alarm. He whispered Sir Osmund.

"'T is Sir William!—Thou hast no time for parley.—If his coming get abroad, we are undone. Call thy men hither, and let him be conveyed away privily.—The dungeon will tell no tales. I'll summon them. If the servants get a whisper of the matter, I'll give out he is an impostor."

Fearful of encountering the glance of his injured lord, this worthy withdrew in great precipitation.

It was but the work of a moment. Sir Osmund had taken the precaution to prevent all egress, so that Sir William and his lady were, in fact, prisoners, at the mercy and discretion of a cruel and cowardly foe.

Sir William had thrown off his cloak and the remainder of his disguise. He now stood proudly erect before the supplanter, who was somewhat stunned by this unexpected issue.

"I defy thee to the combat—hast thou the grace to give me a weapon, or art thou as cowardly as thou art presuming?" tauntingly enquired Sir William.

"Impostor!—wouldst have me believe every wish that folly genders?—To the proof!" sullenly replied Sir Osmund.

"What says the Lady Mabel?—Let her decide," returned the other.

"She!" cried the ingrate, with a contemptuous sneer;

"her wits are so set upon it, that she would worship any ill-favoured lout that should call himself her husband."

"'T is false! unblushing as thou art." The lightning kindled in the lady's eye as she spoke. Sir Osmund quailed beneath her glance.

"Am I mad?" she continued; "ay, if thy wish could have goaded me to it. Thou hast heaped on me tortures, indignities, cruel as thy relentless nature could devise; but I have been spared for this!" Her lips quivered. Shuddering, she spoke with amazing energy and distinctness. "I *have* repented, day and night; but they were unavailing tears. Oh, if I have wronged thee"—she covered her face with her hands—"it was not even in thought that I grew unfaithful to thy trust. My babes, in a moment of weakness I looked on them, smiling as they lay. I could not dash the cup from their lips ere they had well nigh tasted. I could not behold them so soon doomed to misery and want."

She made a convulsive effort to repress her sobs.

"Can years of suffering atone for my crime?"

She drew back as she continued. "I abhor, I loathe the very existence I am forced to prolong. The cloister alone can hide my wretchedness and my shame."

"I forgive thee: nay, shrink not from my embrace," cried the distracted Sir William: "I blame thee not in my regret. Pure, and as free from guilt as when first I knew thee, do I now receive thee to my arms."

Sir Osmund smiled in contempt; at the same time casting a furtive glance towards the side entrance, where, true to his word, Roger de Cliderhow had summoned a guard of Welsh bowmen, their master's accomplices in many a deed of violence and rapine.

Sir Osmund heard their approach. He cautiously undrew the bolts, and pointing to his foe, with a signal they but too well understood, the latter was immediately seized, and with such rapidity, that almost before Sir William was aware of their design, he found himself a prisoner and incapable of resistance.

"Traitor, thou wilt rue this foul despite! I here proclaim thee a craven knight and a dastard!" exclaimed Sir William.

"False pilgrim," growled his adversary, "didst think to foist thy fooleries upon me? The dungeon walls will give thee a patient hearing. Boast to them of thy descent, and when they acknowledge thee,—so' will I.—Guards, to your duty."

Lady Mabel, with a loud and appalling shriek, fell senseless on the pavement.

In vain did Sir William endeavour to free himself from the rude grasp of his conductors. He was hurried along, nor did there appear the remotest possibility of escape. Just as they turned into a sort of corridor, leading to the passages more immediately connected with the place of their destination, they encountered Humphry Lathom. The same half-stupid, half-knavish expression of face was now lighted up by a grin of apparently inexplicable amazement.

"Eh, nuncle," said he, stroking his beard, "but you 're in mighty grace. The Welshman always mounts his he-goats for guard on them he delighteth to honour." With one of his more than ordinarily elvish and malicious shouts, he scampered past the enraged sentinels, and was heard rapidly ascending the steps of the great tower, beneath the massive foundations of which lay the dark and

cheerless abode, so unexpectedly destined for the reception of its owner.

Whilst these occurrences were passing within the walls, Grim's curiosity was in prodigious exercise without. His anxiety increased in a compound ratio with the time elapsed, and inversely as the hope of intelligence was decreasing. Every spare moment his eye was directed towards the hall; but no tidings came, no scout, no messenger from the scene of action, from whom the slightest inkling of the result could be gathered. It seemed as though all intercourse had ceased; all transit, and communication were cut off. It was mighty strange! Some rare doings were afloat, no doubt, and not a soul would remember honest Grim in his thrall. He tied and untied his apron, beat the iron when it was cool, and let it cool when it was hot. "It will be noon presently." He looked at the sun; it seemed to have crept backward for the last half hour: at any rate he was morally certain that useful appendage to this great and troublesome world had stood still, if not retrograded. The mendicants were all gone—no tidings to be gained from them—matters were more than usually contrary and provoking—and if it had not been for some recent disgrace which his prying disposition had occasioned at the hall, he would long ago have satisfied himself by a personal enquiry into the present posture of affairs.

"Hope deferred" was just on the point of being attended with the usual consequences, when, taking another peep through a crevice, constructed for putting into effect a more efficient system of examination, he beheld a phenomenon, as unlooked for as it was incomprehensible. He rubbed his eyes, strongly persuaded that some rigorous

discipline was necessary. He pinched his fingers, shook himself,—was he really awake? or—He took another peep, still it was there; nor crossings, ejaculations, nor other established contrivances, had any effect. The vision that caused all this disturbance was the great banner of the Bradshaigh on the tower, curling full and stately in the breeze. Wonders and misfortunes rarely come unattended. Grim's appetite for the marvellous was now in danger of suffering as much from repletion as before from inanity, and he had just summoned his dame for a special council, when his ears were assailed by a furious ding-dong. Stroke upon stroke, huge, heavy, and unceasing, followed each other in rapid succession. It was the great bell, used only on occasions of emergency and importance, the hoarse tongue of which had been silent since the day of Sir William's departure. There was no time to waste in conjecture. Grim rushed from his dwelling. Convinced that some catastrophe was at hand, his intention was to climb the hill behind his little hovel, in order to reconnoitre the premises with greater facility. Sallying forth, he saw numbers of the peasantry on the same errand. All was bustle and enquiry; each giving his neighbour credit for the possession of some intelligence whereby the mystery might be unravelled.

"Sir William cannot have returned?" said one.

"No," replied another, "or the buck would soon butt the Welshman out of his stall."

"Ha, ha!" said a neighbouring gossip, "those horns are big enough," pointing to the device upon the banner —a buck *passant*.

As they drew nearer to the great gate, the bell had ceased, when suddenly appeared, perched on a corner of

the tower, the well-known form of "Daft Humpy." He threw up his cap, caught it, and whirled it round his head with every demonstration of joyous extravagance. "Hurrah!" shouted he, with a distinct and shrill enunciation, which might be heard to the very extremities of the crowd. "Hurrah for Sir William Bradshaigh!—he is come again!—hurrah, neighbours!—In, in!"

He ran round the battlements, with unceasing vociferation. On hearing this news, numbers entered the gate pell-mell, carrying with them some who would fain have acted with more discretion, by watching the issue warily, and out of harm's way. Of this class was our stout-fisted friend, Darby Grim, who, though of a well-composed valour when fairly tested, was yet slow to move, and cared not to thrust his fingers uselessly into a broil.

The first party that entered was met by Humphry.

"Pick-axes and spades!" cried he, flourishing a stout staff. "To the dungeon!—come along, come along!" —So far from accelerating their speed, this address seemed at once to suspend all further progress. They gazed at each other,—none wist what to do, naturally not overburdened with confidence in the discretion of their guide. Suddenly checking himself, he stood as erect as the nature of his form would admit, before the astonished auditors,

"Ye lazy caterpillars! ye cowardly scum of humanity! if ye follow me not, I'll rouse the Welsh bull-dogs. Sir Osmund hath ta'en him to the dungeon, I tell ye; and who is there that will not lend a hand to the rescue of Sir William Bradshaigh?"

Grim was among the foremost of the invading army: on hearing this news, a latent spark enkindled his courage

most opportunely into a blaze. Seizing a cudgel, he brandished it in front of his comrades, like one half-frantic, crying, "It is, it is; I have seen him this blessed day! —Hurrah for Sir William!"

"Hurrah," shouted the crowd, whose courage, augmenting with their numbers, soon manifested itself in an immediate attack on the cell, whence they speedily extricated their lord. Intoxicated with joy, they vowed a summary vengeance on the discourteous knight who had so vilely entreated him.

Sir William's first care was for the rescue of his lady. She almost forgot her own sorrows on witnessing his joy when once more folding the children to his embrace. A short interval elapsed ere he sought his adversary; but he had fled, along with his unworthy followers. Such was the wrong Sir William had suffered, that his yet untamed spirit deemed it an offence too foul to be expiated by aught but the blood of his merciless foe. Armed, and with but few attendants, he hotly pursued him, and, as old chronicles tell, at a place called Newton, he overtook and slew him in single combat. Returning in safety, he lived happily with his lady to a good old age. They lie buried in the chancel of All Saints, Wigan, where, carved on the tomb, their effigies still exist, the rarest of the monumental antiquities in that ancient edifice.

The lady Mabel's spirit had been too sorely wounded to recover its tranquillity. For the purpose of what was then deemed an expiation to her unintentional offence, she performed a weekly penance, going barefooted from Haigh to a place outside the walls at Wigan, where a stone cross was erected, which bears to this day the name of "MAB'S CROSS."

THE

PRIOR OF BURSCOUGH.

" 'Quhere are ye boun, ye bold prior,
With that ladye on your knee?'
'I 'm boun to the hills, I 'm boun to the dales,
I 'm boun to the grey priory.' "

OLD BALLAD. MS.

Drawn by G. Pickering

Engraved by Edwd Finden.

BURSCOUGH ABBEY.

London, Published by Longman & Co 1829.

Printed by W. Clowes.

THE

PRIOR OF BURSCOUGH.

Of the once renowned priory of Burscough, only two pillars, belonging to the centre arch of the church, are now remaining. It is situated about two miles from Ormskirk, on the Preston road, in a level district of great compass, renowned for its fertility. The extensive manor and living of Ormskirk formerly belonged to this priory. The charter of King Edward II., "reciting and confirming the grants of the donors," with a confirmation of the charter by which "the prior and convent of Burscough, and their successors for ever, shall have one market every week on Thursday, at their manor of Ormskirk, and likewise one fair every year, of five days' continuance," is still preserved in the office of the Duchy of Lancaster.

This religious house was founded for Black Canons, by Robert Fitzhenry, lord of Latham or Lathom, in the reign of Richard I. It was formerly the burial-place of the Earls of Derby; but many of the coffins have been removed to their vault in the church at Ormskirk, built by Edward, the third Earl, great grandson of Thomas, first Earl of Derby, who had the honour of crowning

Henry VII. at Bosworth Field with the coronet torn from the brows of the slain tyrant.

The main fact of the following tradition may be found in the Calend. Rotulo. Patents, fol. 155, art. 13, containing the free pardon granted by Edward III. to the atrocious murderer of Michael de Poininges and Thomas le Clarke, after the rape he had committed on Margaret de la Bech.

At the dissolution, this priory had a superior, five monks, and forty servants. The last prior was John Barton, who surrendered the living, and subscribed to the King's supremacy. He was surviving as late as the year 1553.

That curious structure, the church at Ormskirk, having two steeples, a tower and spire, contiguous to each other, is briefly glanced at in the tradition. This circumstance, according to some accounts, was occasioned by the removal of part of the bells from Burscough at the dissolution of the monasteries, when the existing spire steeple was found to be not sufficiently capacious. The tenor bell, said to have been the third bell at Burscough, bears some apparent proof of its translation. Round the circle, below the ear, is the following incription in black letter, except the initials of the founder:—

"J. S. * de Burscough * Armig. * et * e * vr. * me fecerunt in honorem Trinitatis * R. B. 1497."

About half-way down the bell is another date, 1576.

Where each asterisk is marked, are the *Rose, Portcullis,* and *Fleur de Lis.* Beneath the inscription a neat border is cast, filled up in the centre, with the *Rose, Portcullis,* and *Fleur de Lis,* repeated so as to occupy the whole circumference of the bell.

We have been thus particular in our description, as it

may not be uninteresting to pursue this enquiry, connected as it is with some important historical facts, not irrelevant to the subject.

The following remarks may preclude any farther observations of our own:—

"The *Red Rose* is well known to have been the favourite emblem of the house of Lancaster, from whom Henry VII. was descended, and through whom he gloried in claiming his title to the throne.

"His mother, Margaret Countess of Richmond, then Countess of Derby, was sole daughter and heiress of the Duke of Somerset,* who bore the Portcullis as an heraldic distinction. This nobleman was descended from John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, and Henry had a right to the honourable bearings of his royal ancestors. Hence the 'Rose and Portcullis' were favourite badges of this monarch, as peculiarly belonging to the house of Lancaster. The 'Fleur de lis' is the emblem of France; and, independently of the arms of that kingdom being quartered at that time, and till very lately, with the royal arms of England, Henry had a right to assume this distinction also, as being the grandson of Sir Owen Tudor and Catherine of France, relict of Henry V.

"The first date, also, 1497, refers to a very important period in history, as connected with the Derby family.

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* *Beaufort*, Duke of Somerset. Somerset, Duke of Beaufort, now bears the portcullis for his crest. There is an engraving by Vertue, from a painting in the royal collection at Kensington Palace by Maubeugius in 1496, of the three children of Henry VII. and Elizabeth his queen, *Prince Henry*, *Prince Arthur*, and *Princess Margaret*, which is ornamented at the top with the *portcullis* surmounted with roses.

Two short years before, the great, the brave Sir William Stanley, who, of his own power and interest, raised and brought 3000 horse and foot to the rescue of his prince, when his life, his honour, and his hopes of a throne were at stake; who contributed to his victory, and helped to crown him 'King' in the field; had, by that very sovereign, been sent to the block, merely on account of a doubtful and unguarded expression, reported by a rebel, a traitor, and an ungenerous friend. The unhappy monarch, learning too late the dire effects of groundless suspicion, paid a visit in the following year to his deeply-wounded stepfather, the brother of the dauntless hero whom he had so lately sacrificed.

"It is stated that the King arrived at Knowsley on or about the 24th June, 1496, and then went to Lathom; whence, after remaining a month with his mother, the Countess, and the Earl her husband, he returned to London.

"This brings us within one year of the date on the tenor bell, and I cannot help thinking that its emblems have some allusion to the royal visit to Knowsley and Lathom. It becomes, however, necessary to attempt to account for the second date, 1576, on the same bell: and here we can again—only—conjecture. It is not improbable that the original bell was injured; that, prior to breaking up, its inscription and emblems were carefully moulded, and a new one cast, with the old metal, in the year 1576, care being taken that a copy of the inscription, &c. should fill the same situation in the present bell, which the originals occupied in the former." *

* Glazebrook's Southport.

It may not be deemed irrelevant to mention here a tradition which exists relative to the visit of King Henry VII. at Lathom, particularly as it does not appear to be generally known.

"After the execution of Sir William Stanley, when the King visited Lathom, the Earl, when his royal guest had viewed the whole house, conducted him up to the leads for a prospect of the country. The Earl's fool, who was among the company, observing the King draw near to the edge of the leads not guarded with a balustrade, stepped up to the Earl, and pointing down to the precipice, said, '*Tom, remember Will.*' The King understood the meaning, and made all haste down stairs, and out of the house; and the fool long after seemed mightily concerned that his lord had not had courage to take that opportunity of avenging himself for the death of his brother."—*Kennett's* MSS. 1033. fol. 47.

THE

PRIOR OF BURSCOUGH.

It was on a still and sultry evening, about the close of summer, in the year of Grace one thousand three hundred and forty-seven, that a solitary traveller was seen hastily descending, by a narrow path, into the gloomy thickets that surrounded the neighbouring priory of Burscough. The rain-drops were just pattering on the dark leaves above him, and the birds were fast hastening to some deeper shelter. The timid rabbit, as the stranger passed by, darted into its burrow, and many a quiet face gazed on him from beneath a pair of rugged antlers, peeping through the fences that guarded the demesne. Here and there, a narrow glade opened beautifully into the woods, through which might be seen green lawns and pastures, with herds of dappled deer stealing silently to their covert. The low growl of the distant tiger seemed to come upon each living thing, like the voice of some invisible spirit, subduing with its mysterious speech every power and faculty, with an authority superior to all human control.

The traveller hastened on. The pinnacles and stately turrets of the priory were just visible through the arched

boughs, when, turning into a more sequestered path, he observed a female of a wild and uncouth aspect standing in the way. She showed no disposition to move as he approached, nor did she seem to notice his presence. He stopped, but sufficiently near to distinguish the motions of her lips. An unintelligible mutter accompanied it. She looked darkly towards the south, beckoning to the coming thunder, and pointing, as though she would guide its course towards the grey walls of the priory.

She was dressed in a dark-coloured corset fitting close to the body, and a hood of the same materials. Her hair was a deep jet, and fantastically twisted about her face. She was of low stature, but not bowed by decrepitude or age. Her cheek was hollow, and her complexion swarthy, but her eye grew unnaturally bright, blazing out with a fierceness, intense as though the fire within were visible through these chinks and crevices of the soul's tenement.

Though the storm was rapidly approaching, she still kept her place, unawed by the rude elements, and seeming to suffer but little inconvenience from the shower, now descending with great vigour. The path was narrow, and a thick underwood skirted the road, so that for the stranger to pass was impossible, unless his opponent chose to take up a more favourable position. But the sudden burst of a terrific thunder-clap, which seemed to roll in a continuous peal above them, made him less ceremonious on this head than the laws of gallantry might warrant. He drew nearer to the female, with the intention of seeking a passage on that side where the least disturbance would be given.

"Go not.—'T is accursed!" said she, as if preparing to dispute the attempt.

"I am a stranger,—and hastening for shelter. 'In troth 't is a narrow goit that will not let a drowning man through. Pr'ythee, dame, let me not, in some wise, seem uncourteous. Yet—"

Here he attempted to pass; but she seized him, and with so powerful a grasp, that for a moment his intention was foiled, so sudden and expected was the attack. Though of a stout and muscular shape, yet was he holden tightly, as if she were exulting in her strength. Either malice or madness had given her a vigour of body beyond that of her sex.

"Michael de Poininges!"

The stranger started at this recognition.

"I warn thee! Thinkest thou yon fiend will forward thy mission.—Wilt thou tear the prey from the jaws of the famished and ravening wolf?—Beware!"

Some score of years had elapsed since De Poininges was a visitor in these parts; and he was now upon some secret mission to the Prior of Burscough, Thomas de Litherland, whose great power, and reckless intrepidity of guilt, had won for him a name of no common note, even in those ages of privileged injustice and oppression. No bosom but his own, at least in that neighbourhood, could have been privy to the business which brought him hither; and yet he found a woman casually crossing his path, whose knowledge of his errand was but too evident, and whose appearance and deportment might well excuse the suspicions he entertained, as to her familiarity with the EVIL ONE.

"Go, poor beast! Thou art but fattened for the slaughter!" She said this, apparently addressing a stout buck that was sheltering in the thicket. De Poininges

shuddered, as she looked on him askance, with some dubious meaning.

"I 'll meet thee at supper-time."

This was said with a slow and solemn enunciation, as though some terrible warning was intended, yet durst he not question her further; and ere he could reply, she had disappeared in the recesses of the forest.

The rain now poured down in torrents, and De Poinynges was fain to hasten with all possible expedition towards the porter's gate.

The priory of Burscough had been founded the century preceding for a brotherhood of Black Canons, by Robert Fitzhenry, lord of Lathom. He endowed it with considerable property, emoluments, and alms, and, according to the weak superstition of the age, thought thereby to obtain pardon and rest for the souls of Henry the Second, John Earl of Moreton, himself, his wife, and all his ancestors, at the same time wishing the kingdom of heaven to all persons who would increase the gifts, and consigning to the devil and his angels all who should impiously infringe on his bequests.

It was dedicated to St. Nicholas, and a rude effigy of the saint was carved over the south porch of the chapel, with two or three naked children at his feet. The building was not large, but the architecture was chaste and beautiful, a noble specimen of the early Gothic, then superseding the ponderous forms and proportions of the Norman or rather Saxon era. The arches were sharply pointed. The windows, narrow and lancet-shaped, were deeply recessed; the slender shafts of the columns were carried in clusters to a vast height, surmounted by pinnacles of rich and elegant tracery, these gave a light

and airy character to the whole, highly significant of the buoyant feelings that accompanied so wonderful an escape from the heavy trammels of their predecessors.

Craving shelter, De Poininges was admitted without any question, as all travellers partook indiscriminately of the general bounty. The religious houses in those days were the constituted almonries of the rich and great; and through these overflowing channels, for the most part, proceeded their liberality and beneficence.

He was ushered into one of the *locutories*, or parlours, where, his business being with the prior, he was desired to wait until an audience could be granted.

Prior Thomas, from some cause or other not assigned, held himself at that season much estranged and secluded from his brethren. He had seldom been seen from his lodgings, except when performing his accustomed office in the church. He had not taken his place in the refectory of late, the duties of the day being performed by one of the elder canons.

De Poininges, after a short space, was summoned to the prior's chamber. In his progress, he passed the door of the refectory where the brethren were at supper. It was large and wainscoted, and furnished with an ample dresser. Cupboards were let into the wall, and windows opened into the kitchen, through which their meal was served.

One of the monks was reading the appointed service from a low pulpit or desk. The prior's seat was still vacant. Their way now led through the cloisters, and at the opposite side of the quadrangle, a portal communicated by a long and dark passage with the prior's lodging. This was a sort of inferior castellated mansion, with a

spacious hall, and a smaller dining-chamber immediately adjoining. At the end was a fair chapel or oratory. Ascending a flight of stone steps, they came to a low door. The conductor knocked, and De Poininges soon found himself in the presence of the proud prior of Burscough. He wore a square cap of black stuff, after the fashion of his order. His cloak, or upper garment, was of the same colour, trimmed round the bottom with a double edging. He reposed on a couch, or oaken settle, and seemed, in some measure, either indisposed, or unwilling to notice the homage he received. His figure was strong and muscular, his complexion dull, and almost swarthy. His lips were full, and his aspect rather coarse than sensual. His brows were high, and unusually arched; but his eyes were downcast, and seldom raised towards the speaker. In speech he was brief and interrogative, but impatient under a tardy or inefficient answer.

"Thy name, stranger?"

"Michael de Poininges."

"From whence?"

"My business concerns you in private. I await your reverence's pleasure."

The prior motioned the attendants to withdraw.

"Proceed. Thy message?" He spoke this with precipitancy, at the same time abruptly changing his position.

"Mine errand is touching one Margaret de la Bech," said De Poininges, seating himself opposite to the prior. "And I am directed to crave your help, for the clearing away of some loose suspicions regarding her concealment."

"Her concealment!" replied De Litherland, starting up angrily from the couch. "Her concealment! They

who hide may find. I know not aught of the wench, save that she was mad, and drowned herself. But why not enquire of Sir Thomas? The maiden was not in my keeping." He paced the chamber haughtily, but with a disturbed and lurid aspect.

"Yet," replied the other, "it is well and currently reported, and witnesses there be who have already testified as to a fact, that some of your men were seen the night of her withdrawal lurking in her path, and that screams and other manifestations of the outrage then perpetrating were heard in this direction. Not that we deem any blemish can attach to your reverence in this matter. Still——"

"Why dost thou hesitate in thy speech?" said the prior, in a voice almost inarticulate with choler.

"I would say," answered De Poininges, "that it is our wish, and your duty, to search into this dark question, without favour or prejudice; and, further, we do reckon, that the prior of Burscough is not without the means to discover, and the power to punish his offending vassals."

"And whose evil star guided thee hither with this insolent message?" enquired the prior, pale and trembling with rage.

"Those whom your reverence may not lightly contemn. I have here a warrant from the council to procure all fitting help and suppliance for the bringing up the body of Margaret de la Bech, who is suspected of being detained in this neighbourhood, by persons hitherto unknown, against her own proper will and consent."

The prior paused for a space. A somewhat more placid expression and demeanour was the result.

"I am no stranger," said he, "to this idle and mis-

chievous rumour. Means have been used to discover its likelihood or credibility, but we find it to be utterly false, and unworthy of our notice. The inventor of these tales shall not long escape."

"Yet hath she been a missing ever since," said De Poininges, warily; "and in vain hath search been made for the body. And furthermore, we have her own expressed apprehension, as it regards one she durst not name, and a perilous foreboding of the evil that awaited her. It is to this source, yet obscure, I must own, that our enquiries are to be directed."

"Tarry here until the morning, and I will then give thee some further discourse on the matter."

"Nay, sir Prior," answered De Poininges. "I thank your grace's courtesy, but this night I must away to the village or town bereabout, Ormschurch I think it be, and there, in all likelihood, I may abide for some days."

The prior bit his lips, but sought not to oppose his intent, further than by giving a hint that foul weather was abroad, and of the good cheer and dry lodging the priory afforded. De Poininges, however, took his way afoot, returning to the town, where his horse and two trusty attendants awaited him at the tavern or hostel.

The evening was fair, and the sky clear, save a broad and mountainous ridge of clouds piled up towards the north-east, from whence hung a black and heavy curtain stretching behind the hills in that direction. The sparkling of the sea was visible at intervals behind the low sand-hills skirting the coast, giving out, in irregular flashes, the rich and glowing radiance it received. A lucid brightness yet lingered over the waves, which De Poininges stood for a moment to observe, as he gained the brow of the

hill near the church. To this edifice was then appended a low spire, not exhibiting, as now, the strange anomaly of a huge tower by its side, seated there apparently for no other purpose than to excite wonder, and to afford the clerk an opportunity of illustrating its origin by the following tradition:—

Long time ago, two maiden sisters of the name of Orme, the founders of this church, disagreed as to the shape of this most important appendage. Tower against spire was, in the end, likely to leave the parties without a church in answer to their prayers, had not the happy suggestion offered itself in the shape of a pair of these campanile structures suited to the taste of each.

That the foregoing is an idle and impertinent invention, there is little need to shew, inasmuch as both tower and spire might still have been built to satisfy the whim of the old ladies, though placed in the usual manner, one serving as a substratum to the other. A more probable solution is the following, though it may be as far from the truth.—At the dissolution of the priory of Burscough, in the time of our great reformer, Henry the Eighth,—who, like many modern pretenders to this name, was more careful to reform the inaccuracies of others than his own,—the bells were removed to Ormskirk; but the small tower beneath the spire not being sufficiently capacious, the present square steeple was added, and the wonder perpetuated to this day.

De Poininges, on crossing the churchyard, met there a personage of no less note than Thomas the Clerk, or Thomas le Clerke, retiring from some official duties, arrayed in his white surplice and little quaint skull-cap. He was a merry wight, and in great favour with the

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parish wives. He could bleed, and shave the sconce; draw out bonds and quittances; thus uniting three of the professions in his own proper person. He was prime mover in the May games, and the feast of Fools. Morris, Moriscoe, or Moorish dancers, there is good reason for supposing, were not then introduced, though by some said to have been brought into England in the sixth year of Edward III., when John of Gaunt returned from Spain; but few traces of it are found earlier than Henry VII., so that it is more probable we had them from our Gallic neighbours, or even from the Flemings.

He could dance, too, and play on the rebeck and citerne, this being a common amusement with the customers during the time they were in waiting at the barbers' shops, as newspapers were not then at hand to sustain this difficult office. He was of a dainty person; clad mostly in a kirtle of light watchet colour, thick set with loose points. His hosen were grey, mingled with black, and his shoes were belayed with knots and ornaments, of which, and his other stray gear, he was not a little proud.

This Thomas was used to go about with a censer, on a Sunday, as Chaucer hath it,

"Censing the wives of the parish feast."

Absalom, that pink of clerkly portraiture, seemed but a fair prototype of this individual, Geoffrey Chaucer at this time being a setter forth of rhymes and other matters for the ticklish ears of sundry well-fed and frolicksome idlers about the court of King Edward.

The merry knave of whom we speak was, however, in happy ignorance of all courtly fashions. Provided he

obtained his Sunday contributions, and his Christmas loaf, and his eggs at Easter, little wot he how the world went round. He was a frequent visitor at the tavern, and De Poininges had already been distinguished by his especial notice.

From his character, and the means of information arising out of his multifarious occupations, De Poininges expected that some of the intelligence he was in search of might be gathered from this source.

The petty hostelrie was now in sight, a projecting bush denoting the vintner's residence. The house was but thinly attended, though clean rushes and a blazing billet bespoke comfort and good cheer. De Poininges and his companion turned aside into a smaller chamber, where mine host was speedily summoned for a flagon of stout liquor. This being supplied, they addressed themselves to the wooden utensil with right good will; and as the draughts began to quicken, so did the clerk's tongue not fail to wag the faster. De Poininges adroitly shifted the discourse upon the business of which he was in quest, whenever there was a tendency to diverge; no rare occurrence, Thomas being somewhat loth for a while to converse on the subject. The liquor, however, and his own garrulous propensities, soon slipped open the budget, and scraps of intelligence tumbled out, which De Poininges did not fail to lay hold of, as hints for another line of examination.

"I reckon so, at any rate; and so said Geoffrey," replied the clerk, after a pause, subsequent to some close question.

"Sir Thomas, the lord of Lathom, as you may have heard, he is a good-hearted soul, and this Margaret de la

Bech was companion to his daughter Isabel. She was ever held as a dame of good family and descent, though a stranger in these parts. Then she was passing fair, so that both squire and gentleman, as they looked on her, were nigh devoured with love. They say, too, her conditions were gentle and winsome as a child; and——"

"Good," said De Poininges, who found he was slipping away from the main subject. "But hath not Sir Thomas made some apparent search, since her disappearance from the hall?"

"Save the mark—she was drowned in the moat. So say the gossips," said the clerk, looking askance. "Her hood and mantle were on the brink,—but her body!—why it never jumped out again to look for them—that's all."

"But did no one look for the body?" carelessly enquired De Poininges.

"The knight groped diligently in the castle ditch for many days; but light fishes make light nets, as we say. There was no corpse to be found, and many an Ave-maria has been said for her soul."

"What cause was then assigned for this fearful deed?"

"'T is said she was in love, and went mad! I wot she was ever sighing and rambling about the house, and would seldom venture out alone, looking as though she were in jeopardy, and dreaded some hidden danger."

"Thinkest thou, friend, that some hidden danger might not be the cause; and this show of her drowning but a feint or device, that should turn aside the current of their enquiry?"

The clerk looked anxious and uneasy; sore puzzled, as

it might seem, to shape out an answer. At length, finding that the question could not be evaded, he proceeded with much hesitation as follows:—

"Safe as my Lord Cardinal at his prayers,—she is dead, though; for I heard her wraith wailing and shrieking up the woods that night, as I stood in the priory close. It seemed like, as it were, making its way through the air from Lathom, for the smell of consecration, I reckon."

"Go on," said De Poininges, whose wits were shrewdly beginning to gather intelligence from these furtive attempts at concealment.

"Well-a-day!" continued the clerk, draining an ample potation. "I've heard strange noises thereabout; and the big building there, men say, is haunted by the ghost."

"Where is the building thou speakest of?"

"The large granary beyond the postern, leading from the prior's house towards the mill. I have not passed thereby since St. Mark's vigil, and then it came." Here he looked round, stealing a whisper across the bench—"I heard it: there was a moaning and a singing by turns; but the wind was loud, so that I could scarcely hear, though when I spake of it to old Geoffrey the gardener, he said the prior had laid a ghost, and it was kept there upon prayer and penance for a long season. Now, stranger, thou mayest guess it was no fault of mine, if from this hour I passed the granary after sunset. The ghost and I have ever kept ourselves pretty far apart."

"Canst shew me this same ghostly dungeon?"

"Ay, can I, in broad daylight;—but——"

"Peradventure thou canst shew me the path, or the clue to it; and I warrant me the right scent will lie at the end on't."

"And pray, good master, wherefore may your curious nose be so mightily set upon this same adventure?" said the clerk, his little red and ferrety eyes peering very provokingly into those of his opposite neighbour. Now De Poininges was not for the moment prepared to satisfy this unexpected enquiry, but his presence of mind did not forsake him. Rightly guessing his friend's character, —a compound in universal esteem; to wit, fool and knave, —he drew from his pouch a couple of bright ship nobles, then but newly coined, which effectually diverted the prying looks of Thomas le Clerke.

"Why, look ye," said the latter, as the coin jingled in his bag, "I was ever held in good repute as a guide, and can make my way blindfold over the bogs and mosses hereabout; and I would pilot thee to the place yonder, if my fealty to the prior—that is—if—I mean, though I was never a groat the richer for his bounty; yet he may not like strangers to pry into his garners and storehouses, especially in these evil times, when every cur begins to yelp at the heels of our bountiful mother; and every beast to bray out its reproaches at her great wealth and possessions."

De Poininges was more and more convinced that his neighbour knew more of the matter than he durst tell; but it seemed expedient to conceal his suspicions for the present. In the end it was agreed that the cunning clerk should accompany him so far as to point out the situation; but on no account would he consent to keep watch during the absence of De Poininges. The latter assented to this arrangement, secretly resolving to dictate other terms, where his will should both command and be obeyed.

They immediately set out on horseback, followed by the servants, to whom De Poininges had given a private signal.

The moon had risen. One bright star hung like a "jewel in an Ethiop's ear," in the dark sky above the sun's track, which at this season sweeps like a lucid zone, dividing day from night, round the northern horizon.

Such a time of purity and brightness often succeeds the sultry and oppressive languor of the day, especially when refreshed by the passing storm; the air so clear, that objects press, as it were, upon the eye-balls, affecting the sight as though they were almost palpable to the touch. The dews had not descended, but the leaves were still wet. Big drops glittered in the moonlight, pouring a copious shower on the travellers as they passed. The clerk began a low chant, humming and whistling by turns: this gradually grew more audible, until the full burst of the "*Miserere*" commenced, richly adorned with his own original quavers. So enamoured was he of his qualifications in this respect, that he was fairly getting through High Mass, when, midway in a ravishing "*Benedictus,*" he made a sudden halt.

"What is that creeping behind the bushes there?" enquired he, in a sort of half whisper to his companion. De Poininges looked in the direction pointed out, and thought he saw something, dark and mysterious, moving between the boughs, on his left. He stopped; but the object, whatever its nature, had disappeared.

Sore alarmed was the timid chorister; but though his melodies had ceased, a plentiful supply of Credos and Paternosters were at hand to supply their place. Crossing

himself with a great show of sanctity, he moved on with much caution, his deep hoarse voice having subsided into a husky and abrupt whisper, often interrupted when objects the most trivial arrested his glance, and aroused his suspicions.

They arrived without molestation at an inclosure about a mile distant from the priory. Here they alighted, leaving the horses to the care of their attendants. Turning the angle made by a low wall, they observed a footpath, which the clerk pointed out as the shortest and most convenient course to their destination.

Soon the east end of the priory chapel was visible, basking in the broad light of the harvest-moon, then riding up full and unclouded towards her zenith. Buttress and oriel were weltering in her beam, and the feathery pinnacles sprung out sharp and clear into the blue sky: the shadows were thrown back in masses deep and unbroken, more huge in proportion to the unknown depths through which the eye could not penetrate.

"There—again!—'T is a footstep on our track!" said the clerk, abruptly breaking upon the reverie of his companion.

"'T is but the tread of the roused deer; man's bolder footstep falls not so lightly," was the reply. But this did not quiet the apprehensions of the querist, whose terrors were again stealing upon him. Their path was up a little glen, down which the mill-stream, now released from its daily toil, brawled happily along, as if rejoicing in its freedom. Near the mill, on a point of land formed by an abrupt bend of the stream, stood the storehouse or grange. It was an ample structure, serving at times for purposes

not immediately connected with its original design. A small chamber was allotted to the poorer sort of travellers, who craved a night's lodging on their journey. Beneath was a place of confinement, for the refractory vassals and serfs, when labouring under their master's displeasure. It was here the garrulous clerk said he had been scared by the ghost, and his reluctance to proceed evidently increased as he drew nearer. He did not fail to point out the spot, but resolutely refused to budge a step farther.

"We had best return," said he; "I have told thee what I know of the matter."

"And what should scare thee so mightily, friend," said De Poininges, "from out the prior's grange? Methinks, these ghosts of thine had a provident eye to their bellies. These haunters of the granary had less objection to the victuals than to a snuff of the wind before cock-crow."

"I know not," replied Amen, rather doggedly; "'t is all I heard, though there be more that live hereout than the prior and his monks, I trow."

"Thou hast been here oft-times, o'nights?" carelessly enquired the other.

"I have, upon some chance occasion, it may be; but since that ugly noise got wind, to which my own ears bear testimony, I was not over curious to pass within hearing, though it were only the rogues, some said, that were mulcting the flour sacks."

"But thou knowest there was a hint dropped a while ago at the hostel, that the maiden, whom thou hast now forgotten, methinks, had some connexion with this marvellous tale of thine; and now, it seems, I am to believe 't is but the knaves, or the rats, purloining the prior's corn! Hark thee, friend," said De Poininges, in a stern tone;

"no more evasion: no turn or equivocation shall serve thee; out with it, and lead on, or——"

A bright flash from his falchion here revealed the peril that he threatened.

"*Miserere mei*—Oh,—*Salve et!*——"

"Silence, knave, and pass quickly; but remember, if I catch thee devising any sleight or shuffle, this sharp point shall quicken thee to thy work. It may prove mighty efficacious, too, as a restorative for a lapsed memory."

"I 'll tell thee all!—but—hold that weapon a little back, I pr'ythee. Nay—nay, thou wouldest not compass a poor man's death in such haste."

"Lead on, then, but be discreet," said De Poininges softly, at the same time pushing him forward at his sword's point.

"Here is some help to mine errand, or my craft fails me this bout."

After many qualms and wry faces, De Poininges, by piecemeal, acquired the following intelligence:—

One night, this honest clerk being with a friend on a predatory excursion to the prior's storehouse, they heard a muffled shriek and a sharp scuffle at some distance. Being outside the building, and fearing detection, they ran to hide themselves under a detached shed, used as a depository for fire-wood and stray lumber. Towards this spot, however, the other parties were evidently approaching. Presently, three or four men, whom they judged to be the prior's servants, came nigh, bearing a female. They entered into the shed, and proceeded to remove a large heap of turf. Underneath seemed to be one of those subterraneous communications generally contrived as a retreat in times of peril; at any rate, they disappeared through

the opening, and the clerk and his worthy associate effected their escape unobserved.

Fear of detection, and of the terrible retribution that would follow, hitherto kept the secret undivulged. There could be little doubt that this female was Margaret de la Bech; and her person, whether living or dead, had become a victim to the well-known lawless disposition of the prior.

They were now at the entrance to a low gateway, from which a short path to the left led them directly towards the spot. Entering the shed, they commenced a diligent search; but the terror and confusion of the clerk had prevented such accuracy of observation as could enable him to discover the opening, which they in vain attempted to find, groping their way suspiciously in the dark.

"Softly, softly!" said the clerk, listening.

A low murmur came from the opposite corner, like the muttering of one holding audible communion with his own spirit. De Poininges listened, too, and he fancied it was a female voice. Presently he heard one of those wild and uncouth ditties, a sort of chant or monotonous song, which, to the terrified psalm-singer, sounded like the death-wail of some unfortunate ghost.

The following words only became sufficiently distinct:—

"The sunbeam came on a billow of flame,
But its light, like thine, is done;
Life's tangled coil, with all its toil,
Is broken ere 't is run.

"The kite may love the timid dove,
The hawk be the raven's guest;
But none shall dare that hawk to scare
From his dark and cloud-wreathed nest!

"Wail on, ye fond maidens,
Death lurks in the cloud;
The storm and the billow
Are weaving a shroud:

"There's a wail on the wind;
Ere its track on the main
A light shall be quench'd,
Ne'er to kindle again!"

"Surely I have heard that voice aforetime," thought De Poininges. It was too peculiar for him to mistake. The woman had loitered in his path a few hours before: It seemed her brain was somewhat disturbed: a wanderer and an outcast in consequence, she had here taken shelter oft-times for the night. He determined to accost her; a feeling of deference prompted him, a superstitious notion, arising from an idea then prevalent, that a superior light was granted to those individuals in whom the light of reason was extinct. He approached with caution, much to the terror and distress of his companion.

"It is crazy Isabel," said he, "and the dark spirit is upon her!" But De Poininges was not in a mood to feel scared with this intimation. The way was intricate, and he stumbled over a heap of dried fuel. The noise seemed to arrest her attention for a moment; but she again commenced her song, paying little heed to this interruption. On recovering his position, he was about to speak, when, to his great surprise, she thus accosted him:—

"I have tarried long for thee. Haste—equip for the battle,—and then

"'My merry men all,
Round the greenwood tree,
How gallant to ride
With a gay ladye.'

"I am crazed, belike. God wot—but I can ride o'er the neck of a proud prior.

"'And the moon shone clear
In the blue heavens, where
The stars twinkle through her veil of light:—
There they gave me a merry shooting star,
And I roll'd round the wain with my golden car,
But I leap'd on the lightning's flash, beside
The queen of this murky night!"

"Crazed, indeed!" thought De Poininges.

"Hush," said she: "I'll tell thee a secret." She drew a light from some concealed recess, and, flashing it full in the face of the intruder, seemed to enjoy the effect wonderfully.—On a sudden, her brow wrinkled, and the dark billows came over her spirit as she exclaimed,

"But,

'Thou hast work to do,
Or we may rue
The thieving trade.'

"Go to—I must be calm. The spirit goeth forth, and I may not wander again. But, my poor head: it burns here—here!" And she put her hand tenderly on that of De Poininges, raising it to her brow, which throbbed violently. She started back, as from some sudden recollection, gazing intently on his countenance.

"I know it—the vision tarrieth not. Now," she said, crossing herself with great solemnity, and with apparent composure, as if all trace of her malady had disappeared,—"we must away. Follow;—yet will I first set yon rogue to watch." She sought the terrified man of canticles, and, speaking in a low tone, raised her hand as though with

some terrible denunciation in case of disobedience. Immediately she returned, and, pointing to a heap of loose stuff, began to throw it aside.

"Here—here!"

But De Poininges hesitated, thinking it a somewhat dubious adventure to follow a mad woman, it might be, in quest of her wits. Seeing his unwillingness to proceed, she whispered something in his ear which wrought a marvellous change:—he looked as if petrified with wonder, but he followed now without shrinking. They entered by a narrow door, curiously concealed. On its closing after them, De Poininges and his companion seemed shut out from the world,—as if the link were suddenly broken which bound them to earth and its connexions.

The first sensation was that of chillness and damp, accompanied by a mouldering vapour, like that from the charnel-house or the grave. Their way was down a winding and broken staircase; at the bottom, a straight passage led them on to a considerable distance. Damps oozing from the walls made the path more and more tiresome and slippery as they proceeded. Shortly it became channeled with slime, and absolutely loathsome. The bloated reptile crawled across their path; and De Poininges beheld stone coffins piled on each side of the vault. Passing these, another flight of steps brought them to a low archway, at the extremity of which a grated door, now unbarred, led into a cell seemingly contrived as a place of punishment for the refractory or sinning brethren, who might be doomed to darkness and solitude, as an expiation of their offence. The only

furniture it contained was a wretched pallet, on which, as the light flashed doubtfully, De Poininges thought he beheld a female. He snatched the light, and eagerly bent over the couch. With a shout of joy he exclaimed:—

"Be praised, ye saints, 't is she!"

It was the wasted and squalid form of Margaret de la Bech. She raised her eyes towards him, but they were vacant and wandering. It was soon evident that her reason was impaired, and the spirit still inhabiting that lovely tenement was irrevocably obscured. Cruel had been her sufferings. Crimes too foul to name—but we draw a veil over the harrowing recital! When the last horrible act was consummated, the light of her soul was put out, and her consciousness extinguished.

To meet thus!—A living inhumation, where the body exists but as the spirit's sepulchre! It were better they had been consigned to oblivion, shut up and perishing in the dark womb of the grave. The cry of vengeance had gone up, but was offered in vain for a season. The present period of existence was not allotted for its fulfilment. It was permitted to this monster that he should yet triumph unpunished—his measure of iniquity was not yet full.

The limbs of the unconscious sufferer were pinioned;—the fiend-like mercy of her tormentors prevented her own hands from becoming the instruments of her release. De Poininges restored her to freedom; but, alas! she knew it not. The thick veil, which Heaven's mercy drew upon her spirit, rendered her insensible to outward impressions. He raised her in his arms, bearing her forth from that loathed scene of darkness and disgrace; and when the pure breath of the skies once more blew upon her, it seemed as though it awakened up a faint glimmer in the dying

lamp. She looked round with eagerness, and De Poininges thought some ray of intelligence began to brighten, as objects again appeared to develope their hidden trains of association on the memory; but the light was mercifully extinguished ere she could discover the fearful realities of her despair, and she again relapsed into hopeless and utter inanity.

They were still loitering in the little shed, the clerk groaning out a sad and mournful chant. De Poininges appeared unable to arouse himself to the exigences of the moment, when Isabel, wildly waving her torch towards the entrance, cried:—

"To horse—to horse! They will be here presently. Already has the raven snuffed your carcass.

> "'But the bolt whistled through
> The heavens blue,
> And Sir Lionel lay on the battle-field.'"

She seemed to hearken, as though in apprehension of approaching footsteps. De Poininges, aroused from this dangerous stupor, prepared to escape ere the prior's emissaries had intelligence of her removal.

They had passed the rivulet in safety, and had just gained the wood near to where the attendants lay in wait with the horses, when an arrow whizzed past De Poininges. For him the shaft was intended, but its destiny was otherwise—the unfortunate chanter lay stretched on the ground in his last agony. De Poininges flew on with redoubled speed.

"Treachery!" he cried. His men knew the signal, and galloped towards him; but their aid was too late. A shack-bolt, aimed with a sure hand, pierced him at this moment.

"Take her—Margaret de la Bech!—The prior—a murderer—ravisher! Fly to ——"

The remaining words fell unuttered. His faithful attendants bore off the lifeless body, together with the hapless Margaret, who was soon placed in safety, far from the relentless fangs of the Prior of Burscough.

Fearful and undeniable was the testimony and accusation they brought—but in vain. No effort was spared to bring upon this monster the just recompense of his crime; yet, from the great scandal which a public execution must have drawn upon the church, but more especially from the great influence he possessed amongst the nobles and chief dignitaries of the land, not only did he escape unpunished, but he received the King's most gracious pardon, in the twenty-first year of Edward the Third: so true are the following words from an historian of that reign:—

"These men had so entrenched themselves in privileges and immunities, and so openly challenged an exemption from all secular jurisdiction, that no civil penalty could be inflicted on them for any malversation in office, and even treason itself was declared to be no canonical offence."

THE

EAGLE AND CHILD.

"She 's over the muir,
An' over the border,
An' ower the blue hills far awa':
With her callant, I trow,—
On his saddle-bow,
While the mist-wreaths around them fa'."

THE

EAGLE AND CHILD.

THE main facts of the following narrative, lying scattered through a wide field of barren enquiry, the author has been at considerable pains to collect and arrange in a continuous narrative.

Little needs be said by way of introduction, the traditions here interwoven with the general history being mostly of a trivial nature, and not at all interfering with the facts developed by the historians and rhymers who have illustrated the annals of the house of Stanley. These accounts, exaggerated and distorted as they inevitably must have been, may yet, in the absence of more authentic testimony, afford a pretty accurate glimpse at the real nature of those events, however they may have been disguised by fiction and mis-statement. Where tradition is our only guide, we must follow implicitly, satisfied that her taper was lighted at the torch of Truth, though it may gleam doubtfully and partially through the mists and errors of succeeding ages.

One source from whence we have derived some information, though well known to the comparative few who have explored these bye-paths of history, may not be thought

uninteresting to the general reader, especially as it is connected with the most eventful portion of our narrative.

An ancient metrical account of the Stanleys, Earls of Derby, is contained in some uncouth rhymes, written about the year 1562, by Thomas Stanley, Bishop of Sodor and Man,* and son of that Sir Edward Stanley, who, for his valour at Flodden, was created Lord Monteagle. There are two copies of these verses in the British Museum:—one amongst Cole's papers (vol. xxix. page 104), and the other in the Harleian MSS. (541). Mr. Cole prefaces his transcript with the following notice:—"The History of the family of Stanley, Earls of Derby, wrote in verse about the reign of King Henry the Eighth, from a MS. now in possession of Lady Margaret Stanley, copied for me by a person who has made many mistakes, and sent to me by my friend Mr. Allen, rector of Tarporley, in 1758.—W. Cole."

The MS. formerly belonged to Sir John Crewe, of Utkinton, and was given by Mr. Arden, in 1757, to Lady Margaret Stanley.

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* "Thomas Stanley, Bishop of Man, was a cadet of the noble family of the Stanleys, Earls of Derby; and, after he had spent some time in this and another university abroad, returned to his native country, Lancashire, became rector of Winwick and Wigan therein; as also of Badsworth, in the diocese of York, and dignified in the church. At length, upon the vacancy of the see of the Isle of Man, he was made bishop thereof, but when, I cannot justly say; because he seems to have been bishop in the beginning of King Edward VI., and was really bishop of that place before the death of Dr. Man, whom I have before mentioned under the year 1556. This Thomas Stanley paid his last debt to nature in the latter end of 1570, having had the character, when young, of a tolerable poet of his time."—*Wood's Athenæ Oxonienses.*

The commencement of this metrical history is occupied in dilating upon the pleasure resulting from such an undertaking; and although the flow of the verse is not of remarkable smoothness, yet it hardly furnishes an apology for Seacome's mistake, who, in his "History of the House of Stanley," printed the first fifty lines as prose. The reverend versifier rehearses how Stanley sprang from Audley, and then shews the manner in which his ancestors became possessors of Stourton and Hooton. He dwells upon the joust betwixt the Admiral of Hainault and Sir John Stanley, the second brother of the house of Stanley of Hooton.* Then follows the account more particularly developed in our own story, of the adventures and moving accidents which have been liberally used to adorn the "Garland" of his descendant, William Earl of Derby. "For many generations this was the recognised chronicle of the family, until, in the time of James the First, a clergyman of Chester translated the ryhmes of the Bishop into English, carefully retaining the mistakes of the original, and adding long and dull disquisitions of his own."

Since the publication of the first edition of this work, the author has been favoured by Lord Stanley with the following remarks, communicated to him by a descendant of the Alderley branch of that family:—

"The Sir Thomas Lathom, *alias* Sir Oskatel, named in

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* This extract is from an interesting pamphlet, printed for private circulation only, by Thomas Heywood, Esq., of Manchester, entitled "The Earls of Derby, and the Verse Writers and Poets of the 16th and 17th Centuries. 1825."

Ormerod's *Cheshire*, vol. iii., p. 14,—if the husband of a daughter of Hugh Venables, died 1384, for she had in that year an assignment of dower; and an eagle standing on a nest was certainly not an armorial bearing assumed only by him, or any after him, for it was the crest of his uncle Philip, and it would be a strange circumstance if an uncle should have assumed a crest bearing allusion to the adoption of an illegitimate child: supposing Sir Oskatel to have been the son of Sir Thomas, instead of Sir Thomas himself, the fact of Philip's bearing the crest would be still more extraordinary. That there was an Oskell, or Oskatel, Lathom, who bore on his crest an eagle standing on a child, is proved by the paintings formerly in the windows of Northenden church (see Ormerod, vol. iii., p. 318); but this may have been because it was the old Lathom crest; and the eagle seems to have been, from a remote period, a favourite cognizance of the family. The Torbocks, a younger branch of the Lathoms, descended from Henry the father of the founder of Burscough Abbey, took an eagle's claw for a difference on the family shield; and the grant of Witherington (see the Pedigree before alluded to) was sealed with the Lathom arms on an eagle's breast. It has been supposed, from the resemblance of the Lathom arms to those of the Ormond family, that they were formerly connected. The Butlers trace their descent from Harvey, a Norman nobleman; and Henry, the first owner of Lathom, has been considered to be the son of Theobald Walter, grandson or great grandson of Harvey. If there ever existed a connexion, it appears more probable, however, that Henry was a descendant of Harvey through the female line. Harvey's daughter, Alice, married a Saxon, a great landowner, called in the Testa de Nevill, Ornifre

Magnus, and in the Ormond Pedigree, *Ormus* Magnus. The parish of Ormskirk (formerly called Ormeschurch), in which Lathom is situated, belonged, according to tradition, to the Ormes. *Dalton, Parbold,* and *Witherington* belonged to the Ormes; and these manors certainly became the property of the *Lathoms,—Dalton* having been granted by Henry de Lathom to the Torbocks, and *Witherington* and *Parbold,* by his descendant, to the younger sons of the family. *Ornifre,* literally translated from the old Saxon, would be *eagle-borne:* the connexion of such a name with a family whose insignium became that of an eagle standing on a child, would be a curious coincidence. Orme was the name of the Saxon possessor of *Halton,* in Cheshire; and possibly he may have been the same individual who, driven from his estates in Cheshire, settled in Lancashire, which was not thoroughly subdued by the Conqueror till a later period. The Ormes held property in Lancashire for many generations after the Conquest; and one branch of the family held the township of *Kelleth,* of which they took the name. The arms of the *Kelleths,* or, latterly, *Culcheths,* were an eagle holding a child; and two other families connected with them, bore the same arms."

From the preceding extract, it would appear, that the following solution to the Stanley crest is not unquestioned. Still there are many circumstances which sufficiently attest that the main facts of the narration as given by the author, are well founded. Conflicting testimonies are not easily reconciled, even when relating to events that happen within our immediate cognizance. It would be a difficult and a fruitless task to attempt a solution of difficulties, in the present instance, where the dust of oblivion has accumulated, and almost effaced every lineament from our view.

THE

EAGLE AND CHILD.

In the days of our valiant King Edward, while the fame of Cressy and Poictiers was fresh and stirring in all true and loyal hearts, while the monarchs of two powerful kingdoms were held captive in these realms, lived a worthy knight, of whom we had a brief notice in the preceding narrative. Sir Thomas Lathom, of Lathom, was a nobleman of great wealth and possessions. According to the Calendarium Rotulorum from the Charter Rolls in the Tower, he held lands, besides, in Knouselegh, Childewall, Roby, and Aulusargh. In Liverpool, he was proprietor of the Tower, a structure of but little note until rebuilt and fortified by Sir John Stanley during his

government in Ireland, of which we shall have more to say anon.

Sir Thomas married, in the year 1343, the youngest daughter of Sir Hamon Massey, of Dunham Massey, in the adjoining county of Chester. Twelve years had since that period elapsed at the time when our story begins; and, though earnestly desiring male issue, that his name and race might be perpetuated, yet was the sole fruit of their union, hitherto, a daughter, named Isabel, then just entering on her tenth year. Her winning and surpassing comeliness proved no solace to his disappointment. He grew moodish and melancholy in the midst of his vast wealth; apprehending the utter extinction of his name, and the intrusion of a stranger on his birthright. Hopeless of other issue by his own lady, he had recourse to unlawful means for this purpose, which procured for him a sore chastisement, in the end, as our narrative will show.

In that neighbourhood dwelt a comely maiden, the only daughter of a substantial yeoman, of the name of Oskatell. This damsel, pleasing the amorous fancy of Sir Thomas, fell an easy prey to his arts and persuasions. Though concealed from her friends, their too frequent intercourse at length became visible in the birth of a son, greatly to the joy of the father, who meditated nothing less than to adopt this illegitimate babe for the perpetuation of his name. Yet were there preliminaries of no mean importance to be adjusted, as all men who have wives may well conceive. The lady of Lathom must first be consulted; but probabilities were strongly against the supposition that she would tamely submit to this infringement on the rights of her child by the interposition of a

bastard. Nay, she had beforetime hinted that some individual of the name, of moderate wealth and good breeding, might in time be found for a suitable alliance. Still the success of his scheme was an object that lay deeply at his heart, and he grew more and more anxious and perplexed. One evening, as he wandered out disconsolately in the company of an old and trusty servant, to whom he had imparted the secret, they came to a desert place in the park, nigh to where a pair of eagles had from time immemorial built their nests. A project struck him, which promised fair to realise his wishes. After a multitude of schemes subservient to the main purpose had been thrown out and abandoned, the whole plot was finally unfolded in the following manner:—

A message was conveyed to the mother overnight, that betimes on the following morning the babe, richly clad, should be held in readiness, and a trusty servant would forthwith convey him to the hall. She was peremptorily forbidden to follow; and in her great joy at this announcement, naturally supposing that a more favourable posture of affairs had arisen between Sir Thomas and his lady on the subject, she cheerfully consented to this unexpected deprivation, confident that it was to the furthering of her child's welfare and advancement. The infant, smiling, and unconscious of the change, was taken from his mother's lap, his swaddling-clothes carefully folded together, and committed to the care of the aged domestic.

Little was the anxious mother aware of the great peril he had to undergo, ere the goal which bounded her anticipations was won.

It was the soft twilight of a summer's morning, and the little birds had begun to chirp their matins, and the lark

to brush the dew from her speckled breast, waiting for the first gaze of the sun. The old man pressed the infant closer to his bosom as he drew nigh to the steep acclivity, the solitary dwelling of the eagle. He kissed the babe; then looking round, fearful of intruders, he laid the wicker cradle at the foot of the precipice, and sprung into a dark thicket, close by, as if to watch for the descent of the rapacious bird.

Leaving the child, we turn to Sir Thomas, who on that morning, as was his wont, together with his dame, awoke betimes; but he was sooner a-stir, and more anxious and bustling than usual. Their custom was, awaking with the sun, to begin the day with a quiet stroll about the grounds; and on this eventful morning their walk chanced happily towards the eagle's nest. Being something farther, and more out of their common track, it was noticed good-humouredly by the lady, who seemed to possess a more than ordinary portion of hilarity on the occasion. Evidently under some exciting influence, their walk was unconsciously protracted.

In a gloomy dell, not far from the eyrie, Sir Thomas stood still, in the attitude of listening. The lady, too, was silent and alarmed; but no intimation of danger was visible. Her own senses, though, seemed to gather acuteness,—a circumstance by no means rare in the vicinity of an unusually timid and listening companion, who braces our perceptions to the tension of his own. Soon, however, the short and feeble cry of the babe was heard, when the knight sprung forward, feigning great astonishment at the discovery. Evidently dropped from the talons of the bird, it was looked upon as a special gift of Providence, a deposit direct from the skies; to

have rejected which, would have been a heinous offence, and an awful contravention of the designs of the Giver. Accordingly, the infant was taken home and carefully nursed, being baptized by the name of Oskatell.

The good lady became surprisingly enamoured of the little foundling, believing his adoption was dictated by the will of Heaven; and to this decision its father readily acceded. Sir Thomas, to give the greater sanction to this supposed miracle, as well as to remove all suspicion of fraud from the prying eyes of a censorious world, assumed for his crest an eagle on the wing, proper, looking round as though for something she had lost.

The child grew in years and stature, being liberally furnished in all things according with the dignity he was destined to receive. Sir Thomas purposed the sharing of his wealth equally between his children, a measure which had the entire concurrence of Lady de Lathom. Though younger by some years, Oskatell was generally considered by the world as the future husband of Isabella; but Sir Thomas, aware of danger on this head, early impressed them with some notion of consanguinity, and intimated the impossibility of their union. This prohibition, settling on a womanish fancy, might naturally have been expected to operate in a manner the reverse of his intention. Yet we do not find, from history, that Isabella ever cherished for him any other sentiments than those arising from a sisterly regard.

Growing up to man's estate, he sought the court of King Edward, where, though of a peaceable temper, his soul was stirred to participate in the gallant feats incident to that scene of martial enterprise.

Isabella was now in the full summer, or, it might be, ripening into the rich autumn of her beauty. Her father would by no means have permitted her union save with one of the highest rank, to which her gentle blood and princely inheritance entitled her. And though not a few, hitherto, of noble birth and endowments, had sought the honour of her alliance, yet her heart was untouched, and, in the end, her suitors forebore their homage.

All the country was now mightily roused with the news of the French champion, who, together with sundry of his companions in arms, had challenged the English nation to match them with the like number at a solemn joust and tourney, and of the great gallantry and personal accomplishments of Sir John, then Captain Stanley, who had first taken up the gauntlet in his country's behalf. The lists were prepared. The meeting, by the king's command, was appointed to be holden at Winchester, where the royal court was expected to witness this splendid achievement. Oskatell, returning home, strongly importuned his sister to accompany him to the show, it being then deemed a pleasant recreation for many a fair and delicate maiden to view their champions hack and hew each other without mercy. Isabella, unceasingly urged to this excursion, at length set out for the city of Winchester, followed by a numerous train of attendants, where, in due time, they arrived, mingling in the bustle and dissipation incident to these festivities.

Young Stanley was the second son of Sir William Stanley, Lord of Stanley and Stourton. As a younger branch of the house, he commenced his career, it is said, under the command of his relative Lord Audley; but this appears something doubtful. The battle of Poictiers, in

which Captain Stanley is said to have been, was fought in 1357; and here he must have battled in petticoats, seeing that his father was but married 26 Edward III., and, consequently, making due allowance for accidents and irregularities, young Stanley, as the second son, could not then have proceeded beyond his third year!—a precocity unprecedented, we believe, even in the annals of that fighting era. The conflicting statements we meet with about this time, both traditionary and recorded, we cannot attempt to reconcile. Sufficient information happily exists, however, on which no doubt arises; and, by the aid of that, we proceed with our narrative.

Stanley, according to some, having been a great traveller, had improved himself diligently in the art of war; and, as the old chronicles quaintly relate,—"he visited most of the courts of Europe, even as far as Constantinople, wherein he made such advances in the school of Mars, that his superior skill in arms was generally applauded in every country he passed through." So distinguished and widely extended a reputation for bravery could not fail to provoke the pride and envy of all Christendom; whereupon the young Admiral of Hainault, one of the bravest men of his time, together with divers gentlemen of the French court, defied the whole kingdom to a passage of arms, the result of which challenge has been shewn.

Great were the confluence and resort to the city of Winchester, it being noised abroad as though the king would distinguish the affray by his presence; wondrous the stir and bustle of the soldiers, guards, and attendants, with hordes of idlers and hangers on, from the vast array of knights and nobles, who came either to see or to share in the approaching trial. The splendid banners, the heraldic

pomp and barbaric grandeur of their retinues, augmenting with every fresh arrival, made the streets one ever-moving pageant for many days before the conflict began. Isabella had full leisure to observe, from her own lattice, the gay and costly garniture, and the glittering appointments of the warriors, with the pageants and puerile diversions suited to the taste and capacity of the ignorant crowds by which they were followed. The King's mummers were arrived, together with many other marvels in the shape of puppet-shows and "motions" enacting the "old vice;" Jonas and the Whale, Nineveh, the Creation, and a thousand unintelligible but equally gratifying and instructive devices; one of which, we are told, was "four giants, a unicorn, a camel, an ass, a dragon, a hobby-horse, and sixteen naked boys!"

The crowds attracted by these spectacles were immense, and the city nigh choked with the torrents that set in from every quarter.

From the windows of the houses, where lodged the knights appointed to the encounter, hung their several coats, richly emblazoned, rousing forth many a shout and hurrah, as one and another symbol was recognised to be the badge of some favourite chief: but more than all, was the young Stanley's escutcheon favoured by the fickle breath of popular opinion, which made it needful that a double guard should be mounted near his dwelling,—a precaution, moreover, rendered needful by the many tumults among the different partisans and retainers, not always ending without bloodshed. The arrival of the King, however, soon changed the current of the wondering multitude. Edward was now in his sixty-fourth year, and the fiftieth of his reign. Though the decline of his

life did not correspond with the splendid and noisy scenes which had illustrated the earlier periods of his history, yet he still manifested the same restless and undaunted spirit, ever considered as the prevailing attribute of his character. Towards the close of his career, he had the mortification to endure the loss of his foreign possessions, having been baffled in every attempt to defend them. He felt, too, the decay of his authority at home, from the inconstancy and discontents of his subjects. Though his earlier years had been spent amid the din and tumult of war, and the business of the camp, yet was he, at this period, almost wholly given up to pleasure and the grossest of sensual indulgences. Alice Pierce, to whom he was immoderately attached, had gained an ascendancy over him, so dangerous, that the parliament remonstrated, with a courage and firmness worthy of a more enlightened era; and, in the end, he was obliged to remove her from court. Sometimes, the spirit of his youth awoke; the glory of past ages was stirred up within him; and, like the aged war-horse neighing to the shrill note of the trumpet, he greeted the approaching tournament with something of his wonted ardour,—though now but an expiring flash, brightening a moment ere it was extinguished.

The day rose, calm and unclouded. The thin haze of the morning had disappeared, and an atmosphere of more than common brilliancy succeeded. Through a great part of the preceding night, the armourers had been busily employed, altering and refitting the equipments, and the dawn had already commenced ere their labours were suspended. The lists were carefully scrutinised, and all chance of foul play averted. The priests, too, had blessed

the armour and weapons from magic spells and "foul negromancie."

The barriers were built of stout boards, firmly riveted together; the royal pavilion being on the southern side, richly canopied, and embroidered with costly devices. Galleries were provided for the nobles, not a few of whom, with their courtly dames, were expected to be present.

The lists were sixty paces in length and forty in breadth, between the platforms on which the knights' tents were erected. The ground within was made hard and level, the loose stones and other impediments being carefully removed. There were two entrances, east and west, well guarded and strongly fenced with wooden bars about seven feet high, so that a horse might not leap over. The tents of the warriors were fancifully decorated, every one having his shield newly emblazoned and hung out in front, where the pages and esquires watched, guarding vigilantly these sacred treasures. Nothing was heard but the hoarse call of the trumpet, the clank of mail, and the prancing of horses, pawing and eager for the battle.

Long before the appointed hour, the whole city was in motion. Isabella, too, whose bright eyes had not closed since the first gleam had visited her chamber, was early astir. An ugly dream, it is said, troubled her. Though of ripe years, yet, as we have noticed before, love had not yet aimed his malicious shafts at her bosom, nor even tightened his bowstring as she tripped by, defying his power; so that the dream, which in others would appear but as the overflowing of a youthful and ardent imagination, seemed to her altogether novel and unaccountable, raising up new faculties, and endowing her with a train of feelings heretofore unknown. No wonder that her looks were betrayers;

her whole deportment manifested some hidden power controlling her high spirit, insomuch that her favourite maiden was fain to abate her morning gossip; yet Isabella was not averse to speech, though the words seemed to linger heavily on her tongue, losing that lightness and exuberance which betokens the mind free from care and oppression.

She had dreamed, that in her own wild woods a knight accosted her: she attempted to fly, but was withheld by some secret influence. He raised his visor, smiling as he bent his knee in token of homage. He was a stranger. Grasping her hand, she felt the cold hard pressure of his gauntlet. She awoke,—and sure enough there was the impression, as of some mailed hand, upon her delicate fingers! While marvelling at this strange adventure, a deep slumber again overpowered her, when a graceful cavalier, unarmed, was at her side. He raised her hand to his lips, and her whole soul responded to the touch. He was about to speak, when her father suddenly appeared with a dark and forbidding aspect. He began to chide, and the stranger, with a glance she could not erase from her recollection, disappeared. It was this glance which subdued her proud spirit to its influence. Her maidenly apprehensions became aroused; she attempted, but in vain, to drive away the intruder: the vision haunted her deeply—too deeply for her repose! Marks of some outward impression were yet visible on her hand, whether from causes less occult than the moving phantasma of the mind, is a question that would resist all our powers of solution. In a mood thus admirably fitted for the encountering of some marvellous adventure, did she mount

her little white palfrey, all pranked out and caparisoned for the occasion.

Followed by a train of some length, with Oskatell by her side, the daughter of the house of Lathom allured the eyes of not a few as she passed on. Many a stately knight bent his head, and many an enquiry was directed to the esquires and attendants, as she drew near.

The scene of this renowned combat was a spacious plain below the city, on the opposite side of the river Itchen. The chalky cliffs, which obtained for it the name of Caer Gwint, or the White City, were studded with gay and anxious multitudes, whose hopes and fears have long been swept off by the waves of passing generations.

Winchester being one of the fixed markets or staples for wool, appointed by King Edward, the city had risen in power and affluence above its neighbours. Yet the plague, by which it was almost depopulated some years before, had considerably abated its magnificence. But the favour of royalty still clung to it, and Arthur's "Round Table" attested its early claims to this distinguishing character,—a monarch's residence. The castle, where the Round Table is still shewn, was then a building of great strength, and enlivened by the king's presence, displayed many a staff and pennon from its stately battlements.

Isabella passed by the fortress just as the trumpets announced the near approach of the king down the covered way. The chains of the drawbridge were lowered, and presently issued forth the armed retinue of the monarch. Isabella and her train were obliged to remain awhile as idle spectators.

The king, though old and infirm, yet retained his lofty

and commanding appearance. His charger was armed with the *chanfrons* and gamboised housings, having thereon the royal arms, and proudly did the conscious beast paw and champ, as if rejoicing under his burden.

Edward was dressed in a glittering surcoat of crimson silk, worked with lions and *fleurs-de-lis*. His helmet was cylindrical, surmounted by a lion as its crest. Round the rim was a coronet of gold, worked with *fleurs-de-lis* and oak leaves. A gorget and tippet covering the shoulders was fastened beneath the chin, giving the head a stiff, but imposing air of command. He carried a short truncheon, which he wielded with great dexterity; yet his armour, though light, and of the finest temper, seemed more cumbersome to him now than in former days.

The royal standard of England, thus described, was borne before him:—It was from eight to nine yards in length, the ground blue and red, containing, in the first division, the lion of England imperially crowned. In chief, a coronet of *crosses pater* and *fleurs-de-lis*, between two clouds irradiated. In base, a cloud between two coronets. In the next division the charges were, in chief, a coronet; in base, an irradiated cloud. In the third, the dexter chief and sinister base was likewise an irradiated cloud; the sinister and dexter chief a coronet, as before. Motto, "Dieu et mon droyt." The whole of this procession was one vast masquerade of pomp, little betokening the frailty and folly which it enveloped. Though, to all outward show, fair and glistering, yet was there a heavy gloom brooding over the nation. Prince Edward, the flower of chivalry, usually called the Black Prince, from the colour of his armour, lay then grievously sick,—and the whole hope and welfare of the land seemed to hang on

his recovery. The known ambition of John of Gaunt was a main source of alarm and anxiety. "Edward, had, however," says the historian, "declared his grandson heir and successor to the crown, and thereby cut off all the hopes of the Duke of Lancaster, if ever he had the temerity to entertain any."

Not forgetting his former homage to the sex, the king's eye lingered on the form of Isabella; but she drew back, daunted by the ardour of his gaze. Oskatell saw the impression she had made, in nowise displeased, hoping some ray of royal favour would be reflected to him from the beam that already dawned on his companion.

We now pass on to the field, where every thing was in readiness for the combat. The knights had heard mass and made confession, these being the requisite preparatives to the noble deeds they had that day vowed to perform. The heralds had made the usual proclamation against the use of magic, unlawful charms, and other like devices of the devil, when a loud flourish of trumpets announced the approach of Stanley, who first entered the lists, mounted on a grey charger, furnished with the chevron, or war-saddle, then of great use in withstanding the terrific shock of the assailant, being high up in front, and furnished at the back like an arm-chair. He was equipped in a full suit of Italian armour, displaying a steel cuirass of exquisite workmanship, deemed at that time a novel, but elegant, style of defence, and destined soon to supersede the purpoint or gamboised work called mail. If well tempered, it was found to resist the stroke of the lance without being either pierced or bent, nor was it liable to be pushed through into the body, as was sometimes the case with the "*mailles*" when the wambas or hoketon was

wanting underneath. His shield was thus marshalled:—Argent; on a bend azure, three stags' heads cabossed. In the sinister chief, a crescent denoted his filiation; underneath was the motto, "Augmenter." The shield itself or pavise was large, made of wood covered with skin, and surrounded with a broad rim of iron.

He looked gracefully round, first lowering his lance in front of the king's pavilion, and afterwards to the fair dames who crowded the galleries on each side. Whether from accident or design, his eyes rested on Isabella with a strong expression of earnestness rather than curiosity. Doubtless, the noble representatives of the house of Lathom excited no slight interest amongst the spectators, and the young hero might have formed some yet undeveloped anticipations on this head.

She blushed deeply at this public and unexpected notice. The recollection of her dream made the full tide of feeling set in at once in this direction, much to her consternation and dismay; but when happening to turn hastily round, a silken bandage, loosened by the sudden movement from some part of her dress, was carried off by the wind and deposited within the lists; she was greatly embarrassed; and her confusion was not a little increased, as the young gallant with great dexterity transferred it to the point of his lance. At this choice of his "lady love," a loud shout arose from the multitude; and Isabella, now the object of universal regard, would have retired, but that the density of the crowd, and the inconvenient structure of the building, rendered it impossible.

Another flourish of trumpets announced the approach of the young Admiral of Hainault. His armour was blue and white, beautifully wrought and inlaid with silver. His

steed was black, having the suit and furniture of the war-horse complete. The *croupière* and *estival*, together with the *chanfron*, were of the most costly description. A plume of white feathers decorated his casque, extending his athletic form into almost gigantic proportions.

The needful ceremonies were gone through; a deep and almost breathless silence succeeded, like the stillness that precedes the first swing of the storm. The trumpets sounded; the sharp click of the lances was heard falling into the rest; and the first rush was over. The noise of the shock was like the burst of the tempest on the forest boughs. Through the dust, the horses were seen to recoil upon their haunches; but as it blew heavily away, the warriors had regained their upright position, having sustained no injury, save by the shivering of their lances with the stroke. A loud shout of applause ensued; and the esquires being at hand with fresh weapons, each knight was too eager for the fray to lose a moment in requesting the usual signal. Again their coursers' feet seemed to spurn the earth. At this onset, the French knight bent back in his saddle, whether from subtilty or accident was not known, but there was a loud clamour; and the Frenchman, recovering himself, spurred on his steed with great vigour, perhaps hoping to take his adversary at unawares; but the latter, darting aside with agility, the other's lance ran full against the boards, and in deep vexation he came back to the charge.

Trembling with choler, he hardly restrained himself until the prescribed signal; then, as if he would make an end of his opponent, he aimed his weapon with a direct thrust towards the heart; but Stanley, confident in his own might, was fully prepared for the blow, as the event

sufficiently proved; for the French knight was seen to reel from his saddle, the point of his enemy's lance being driven completely through his armour. He rolled backwards on the ground, and so vigorous had been the attack, that his horse's back was broken, and they lay together, groaning piteously, besmeared with blood and dust, to the sore dismay of his companions. Stanley suddenly alighted, and helped the pages to undo his armour; but ere his beaver could be unclasped, he had fainted by loss of blood; and being borne off the field, he shortly afterwards expired.

The king was mightily pleased with this great prowess of the victor, insomuch, that he knighted him on the spot; and, according to the old ballad, gave him goodly manors

"For his hire,
Wing, Tring, and Iving, in Buckinghamshire."

He had so won, likewise, on the hitherto impenetrable disposition of Isabella, that when he came to render his homage at her feet, she trembled, and could scarcely give the customary reply.

Raising his visor, and uncovering his helmet from the grand guard, a plate protecting the left side of the face, shoulder, and breast, he made a lowly obeisance at the gate of his mistress's pavilion, at the same time presenting the stolen favour he had now so nobly won. With a tremulous hand she bound it round his arm.

"Nay, thy chaplet, lady," shouted a score of tongues from the inquisitive spectators. Isabella untied a rich chaplet of goldsmith's work, ornamented with rose garlands, from her hair, and threw it over his helmet. Still armed with the gauntlets, which either through hurry or

inadvertence, he had neglected to throw aside, as was the general courtesy for the occasion, the knight seized her hand, and with a grasp, gentle for any other occasion, pressed it to his lips. The lady uttered a subdued shriek, whether from pain or surprise, it boots not now to enquire; mayhap, it was the remembrance of the mailed hand she had felt in her dream, and to which her fingers, yet tingling with the pressure, bore a sufficient testimony. Sir John bent lowlier than before, with one hand on his breast, in token of contrition. A thousand strange fancies, shapeless and undefined, rushed by, as the maiden looked on the warrior. It was the very crisis of her dream; her heart seemed as though it would have leapt the walls of its tenement,—and she was fain to hide her face under the folds of her mantle.

"Now on my halidome," said the king, "there be two doves whose cooing would be the better for a little honest speech. Poor hearts! it were a pity their tongues had bewrayed their desire. Fitz-Walter, summon them hither."

The blushing Isabella was conducted to the royal presence, where the king was graciously pleased to impress a salute on her rich and glowing cheek. No mean honour from so gracious and gallant a monarch, who, though old, was yet accounted a mighty adept in the discernment of female beauty, he never being known to suffer contact of the royal lip with aught but the fairest and most comely of the sex.

"Sir John, I commend thee to thy mistress. A dainty choice. She is 'The Queen of Beauty' for the day, and to-night we command your presence at the banquet."

"My gracious liege," said Isabella, pointing to Oskatell,

I have a brother,—unto his care it is but meet that I entrust myself; and he—"

"His person and endowments," interrupted the king, "are not unknown to us. I do honour thee by ennobling him; for though our ladies' brightness be all too dazzling to receive a glory from us, yet peradventure for their sakes our courtesy is vouchsafed. Rise, Sir Oskatell de Lathom."

Again a flourish of trumpets proclaimed the king's favour, who with many more gracious speeches won the affection of all who heard him that day.

Several other jousts and "gentle passages" were held, the success of which falling principally with the English combatants, the boasting pride of France was again humbled before the king, who seemed to renew his former victories at this memorable "*Tourney of Winchester.*"

But Isabella had bartered years of repose for this brief season of intoxicating splendour. The barbed arrow was in her heart, and the more she struggled, the more irreclaimable it grew. Doubtless that unlucky dream had rendered her more susceptible to the wound.

Dreams have this operation; and whether good or evil, they leave an impression that no simple act of the will can efface. It seems to be the work of a power superior to our own, for "the less begetteth not the greater;" how, then, can the mind originate a train of conceptions, or rather creations, superior to itself—above its own power to control?

But Isabella was too much engrossed by her feelings to attempt their solution. She lay restless on her couch, but there was no escape. An unquenchable flame was

kindled in her soul, that not all the cool appliances of reason could subdue. To-morrow she must depart, and that gay pageant vanish as a dream;—and yet not like her own dream, for that was abiding and indelible. To-morrow the brave knight must withdraw, and the "Queen of Beauty," homaged for a day, give place to another whose reign should be as brief and as unenduring. In this distempered mood, with a heart all moved to sadness, did the Lady Isabel pass the first hours of the following night.

Suddenly the sharp twang of a citerne was heard in the street below her window,—nothing new in these piping times of love and minstrelsy; but so sensitive was the ear now become to exterior impressions, that she started, as though expecting a salutation from the midnight rambler. Her anticipations were in some measure realised, the minstrel pausing beneath her lattice. A wooden balcony projected from it, concealing the musician. Isabella threw a light mantle around her, and, rousing one of her maidens, she opened the window. The rich melody came upon her senses through the balmy odour of myrtle boughs and leaves of honeysuckle. The chords were touched with a skilful hand, and the prelude, a wild and extempore commentary on the ballad, was succeeded by the following ditty:

"My ladye love, my ladye love,
The moon through the lift is breaking;
The sky is bright, and through the night
The queen of Love is waking.
Yon little star that twinkleth so,
Fluttering her bright eyes to and fro,
How doth she chide,
That thou shouldest hide,
All joyaunce thus forsaking.

My ladye love, my ladye love,
The moon through the lift is breaking;
The sky is bright, and through the night
The queen of love is waking."

The singer withdrew; and Isabella was convinced, or her eyes were befooled by her fancy, that, as he emerged from his concealment, his form could be none other than the one her imagination was too familiar with to mistake. He, too, had caught a glance of the listeners, for presently a folded paper was thrown over the balusters, and the minstrel departed. The first light that came through the long low casements revealed all that her hopes anticipated. The billet was from Sir John Stanley, whose regrets, mingled with vows and protestations of love, were to this purport, that he must needs be away before daybreak, on urgent business from the king. He sent a sigh and a love-token, commending himself to her best thoughts, until he should gain his acquittance so far as to visit Lathom.

Passing over the departure, the bustle, and the weariness of a twelve days' journey, let us behold the maiden once more in her pretty bower at Lathom. How changed! the whole assumed a fresh aspect, thus viewed from a different state of the mind. Her favourite spaniel licked her hand, but she did not notice his caresses: all about her was as if the wand of the enchanter had been there, changing its image, each object calling forth a train of sensations heretofore unknown. Even the hangings and figured draperies wore a grim and perturbed expression; and Jeptha's daughter and the Queen of Sheba looked more dismal and profuse than ever from the dusky arras.

She strayed out, as beforetime, into the woods; but their

gloom was more intense, and the very birds seemed to grow sad with her melancholy musings. Their song, that used to be so sprightly, was now subdued and mournful, and all their gay and bubbling hilarity was gone. If she wandered forth towards evening, the owl hooted in her path, and the raven croaked above her. She heard not the light matin of the lark: Fancy, stimulated alone by gloomy impressions, laid hold on them only, failing to recognise aught but its own image.

Sir Oskatell and her father had often taken counsel together since his return. Shortly afterwards, Isabella received a summons to attend Sir Thomas in private. What was the precise nature of that interview does not appear, save that the lady withdrew to her chamber, and the brow of Sir Thomas was for a long space moody and disturbed. Sir John Stanley, though of gentle descent, was not endowed with an adequate inheritance, at least for the heiress of Lathom, whose extensive possessions, though shared by Oskatell, were deemed by Sir Thomas of sufficient magnitude to command a connexion of higher rank and importance. As a younger brother, he could have slight pretensions to patrimony, and, save the manors, then but a slender endowment, just granted by King Edward, his profession as a soldier supplied his chief revenue. His exclusive notice of the Lady Isabella at the tournament was quickly conveyed to the ear of Sir Thomas; and, it was said, the latter had vowed that no portion of wealth should descend to his daughter, if wedded to Sir John, but that the whole should be settled on Sir Oskatell. "The course of true love never did run smooth." That Sir John Stanley had a watchful eye, at the time, to the fortune as well as to the person of Isabella, is by some

rather freely hinted. This, however, turns out to be an unfounded calumny, as the events, hereafter unfolded, will abundantly demonstrate.

Sir John, after vainly endeavouring to avert this cruel purpose, and to win the old man's favour, entered into the service of the king. He hoped that some lucky adventure would enable him to appear with more certainty of success the next time he played the suitor at Lathom.

Isabella, though sorely importuned to the contrary, remained true to her first and only attachment; and Sir Oskatell was likely, in the end, to gather to himself the whole of these vast possessions. A disposition to this effect, she had for some time suspected. His conduct, too, was less kindly of late, and he took upon himself an authority more direct and unconditional. Indeed, it seemed but too evident, that Sir Oskatell was looked upon as the ultimate possessor. The maiden pined sorely at her lot, and lack of perpetuity in the inheritance. But women's wits have compassed a sea of impossibilities, and will ever continue irresistible, until their beautiful forms shall no longer eradiate these dull mortalities with their presence.

One day an aged minstrel craved admission. Sir Thomas had just retired from the banquet. Isabella and the Lady of Lathom were at their usual employment, in their private chamber, plying the needle in "Antres vast," aud wildernesses of embroidery, along with the maids. The request was granted; soon after which an old man, bending apparently under an accumulation of years and infirmities, entered the apartment. There was a keen scrutinising restlessness of the eye, stealing through the

silvery locks about his brow, that but ill accorded with his apparent decrepitude.

After a very profound obeisance, which the lady-mother scarcely recognised, he addressed himself to his vocation. A mighty indifferent prelude succeeded the arrangement of the strings, then a sort of jig, accented by the toe and head of the performer. Afterwards he broke into a wild and singular extempore, which gradually shaped itself into measure and rhythm, at times beautifully varied, and accompanied by the voice. We shall attempt a more modern and intelligible version of the sentiments he expressed.

SONG.

I.

"Rich round thy brow are the clusters bright,
And thy tresses are like the plume,—
The plume of the raven, glossy with light,
Or the ray on the spirit's deep gloom.

II.

"As I gaze, the dim echoes of years that are past
Bring their joys to my bosom in vain;
For the chords, which their spell once o'er memory cast,
Ne'er shall waken to gladness again!"

"I hold these minstrels now no better than the croaking of your carrion crow," said the elder lady: "these are not like the songs we used to hear in hall and bower at Dunham Massey. Then—" the old lady forgetting that her own ears had played her false, and her relish for these dainties had departed—

"Then," raising her voice and gazing round, as past scenes recurred to her fancy, "how my young heart

would leap at the sound of their ditties! and how I long to hear again '*Sir Armoric*' and the '*Golden Legend,*' and all about the lady with the swine's snout and the silver trough!"

But Isabella heard not her mother's reminiscences. The minstrel engrossed her attention, absorbing her whole thoughts, it might seem, with the display of his cunning. Her cheek was flushed, and her lip trembled. Some mysterious faculty there was either in the song or the performer.

Again he poured forth a strain more touching, and of ravishing sweetness.

SONG.

I.

"Smile on, my love; that sunny smile
Is light and life and joy to thee;
But, oh! its glance of witchery the while,
Is maddening, hopeless misery to me.

II.

"Another bosom thou mayest bless,
Whose chords shall wake with ecstasy;
On mine, each thrilling thought thy looks impress,
Wakes but the pang of hopeless destiny.

III.

"Smile on, my love; that sunny smile
Is light and life and joy to thee;
But, oh, its glance of witchery the while,
Is hopeless, maddening misery to me."

These were burning thoughts from the bosom of age; and had not the old lady's perceptions been somewhat obtuse, she might have guessed the minstrel's purpose.

His despair was not so utterly hopeless, and without remedy, as the purport of his song seemed to forebode,—for the morning light saw the bower of Isabella vacant, and her bed undisturbed. She was then far over the blue hills into Staffordshire, where another sun saw her the wife of Sir John Stanley; immediately after which they departed into Ireland.

Sir Thomas threw the reins on the neck of his choler, and, as tradition reports, did then disinherit her for ever, in favour of Sir Oskatell. How far the latter might be privy to this resolve, or whether Sir Thomas, goaded on aforetime to the aggrandisement of his name, seized the present opportunity only as it served his purpose, both history and tradition leave us without the means of deciding. There does, however, seem reason to suspect some unfair solicitations practised on Sir Thomas, which subsequent occurrences strongly corroborate; but particularly the fact, that on his death-bed he solemnly revoked this injustice, appointing Sir John Stanley his lawful heir, disinheriting Sir Oskatell, save a slight provision hereafter named, and declaring his illegitimacy. We would not lightly throw out an accusation of this nature; but, surely, an act of retribution, so unsparingly administered, would not have been put in force, had not past circumstances, in some measure, rendered it just.

Let us now resume our narrative from the date of the tournament; soon after which, King Edward died, and Sir John Stanley, in the first year of his successor, Richard II., was honoured by him with a commission to Ireland, for the purpose of assisting in the total reduction of that unfortunate kingdom. By his great prudence and success, he brought under submission the great

rebel chiefs,—to wit, O'Neal, king of Ulster; Rotherick O'Connor, king of Connaught; O'Caral, king of Uriel; O'Rurick, king of Meath; Arthur M'Keir, king of Leinster; and O'Brien, king of Thomond. In the year 1379, Richard coming in person to Ireland, these chieftains did homage to him as their sovereign prince. For his great and eminent services on this occasion, Sir John had granted to him, by patent for life, the manor and lands of Black Castle in that country.

Ten years did Sir John sojourn, by the king's order, in this unquiet and troublesome appendage to the English crown. And it may be conceived, that if true love had any hold on his affections, they were oft communing with Isabella, forsaken, as she then thought, by him whom she had once too surely trusted. In the tumult of war, and in the administration of his high office, no doubt, her gentle form would visit his spirit, and like the star of future promise, guide him on to his achievements.

About the year 1390, when the return of Henry Duke of Lancaster from his banishment, without leave of the king, had caused a sore dismay throughout the land, Richard, harassed with the apprehension of danger, appointed Sir John Stanley Lord Justice of Ireland for six years. He was now able, in some measure, to confer a sufficient dignity on his beloved, though not yet equal, in point of wealth, to the wishes of Sir Thomas. But feeling desirous to know the state of her disposition towards him, he set out in disguise for Lathom, where, as we have before stated, he so far prevailed, that she became Lady Stanley in spite of all the opposition she had endured. Aware of the determination of her father, he deemed her love a sufficient recompense, thus fully

refuting the insinuations, that her dower had more charm for him than her person.

Returning to Ireland with his lady, they lived there happily for some years.

When Henry of Lancaster was crowned by the title of Henry the Fourth, Sir John being still Lord Justice of Ireland, and holding the government there in favour of the deposed king, the new monarch, well knowing the knight's power, together with his skill and experience, as well in the senate as in the field, found means to attach him to the reigning interest, and, as a mark of signal favour, granted to him and his heirs for ever, by letters patent, many lands there named, lying in the westerly part of the county of Chester. Soon afterwards occurred that memorable rebellion, when the Welsh blood, boiling to a ferment by the hot appliances of one Owen Glendower, an esquire of Wales, and in his youth a resident at the Inns of Court in London, kindled the flames of intestine war. After he had conspired with the Percies and their adherents, together with a large body of the Scotch, these malcontents threatened to overthrow the now tottering dominion of King Henry.

The most prompt measures were, however, taken to meet this exigency,—and Sir John Stanley was suddenly called out of Ireland; Sir William Stanley, then lord of Stanley and Stourton, being appointed his deputy. Sir John soon applied himself in such earnest to the service of the king, his master, that a large and powerful army, headed by Henry himself, together with "Prince Harry," his son, marched against the rebels. Near to Shrewsbury the latter were overthrown; Sir John, by his great bravery and address, mainly contributing to the success of

the engagement. His presence was now become of essential service to the king, who, in consequence, appointed his second son, the Duke of Clarence,—who claimed the title of Earl of Ulster in right of his wife,—Lord Lieutenant of Ireland in his stead, the new governor landing at Carlingford on the 2d August, 1405.

Sir John obtained, as a favour granted but to few, and those of the highest rank, license from the king to fortify a spacious house he was then building at Liverpool; the site whereof was given by Sir Thomas Lathom, who, we may now suppose, had in some measure swerved from his most unjust purpose, possibly on apprehending the great honours and influence that Sir John had already acquired without his aid or furtherance. This plot of land, it was said, contained 630 square yards, which he held, together with several burgage houses and lands in that town.

He had full license to build a castle or house of strength, embattled and machicolated, with *tenellare*, or loop-holes in the walls, and other warlike devices, which no subject could undertake without special leave from the king.

The Isle of Man was at this time, by Northumberland's rebellion, forfeit to the crown. Sir John the same year obtained a grant of it for life, and in the year following a regrant to himself and his heirs for ever, with the style and title of "King of Man."

It were needless to enumerate all the honours and distinctions heaped in such unwonted profusion upon our illustrious hero. It has rarely happened that so rapid a career has met with no reverse, for the fickle goddess mostly exalts her votaries only to make their downfall the more terrible.

Henry dying in 1413, was succeeded by his son Henry V.

with whom Sir John was held in equal esteem, being again appointed to the government of Ireland; but, landing in Dublin, his health was now visibly on the wane. Four months afterwards he died at Ardee, to the great grief of his family, and the irreparable loss of the nation. He was a rare instance wherein a courtier, through four successive reigns, carried himself unimpeached and unsullied by the political vices which were then too general to excite reproach. He was truly a knight "*sans peur et sans reproche.*"

He left two sons, John and Thomas, and one daughter, whose fortunes, at this time, we shall not attempt to follow.

Lady Stanley, his widow, returned to Liverpool with her children, and lived there until her death, in the house built by her husband.

Now did the beam of Sir Oskatell's favour, like an April day, suddenly change its gaudy and suspicious brightness. Sir Thomas, waning in years, and ready to depart, began to consider his former misdoings. His daughter and her offspring were, by the laws of nature, justly entitled to his possessions, which he,—reflecting on the great impiety and injustice of withholding, bequeathed, with some exceptions, to Lady Stanley and her heirs, revealing, at the same time, the fraud which he had practised, and extinguishing for ever the hopes and expectations of Sir Oskatell. Yet was he not left entirely destitute: to him and to his descendants were reserved, by due process of law, the manors of Irlam and Urmston, near Manchester, with divers other valuable inheritances. At the same time was given to him the signet of his arms, with the crest assumed for his sake, *an eagle regardant,*

proper. It was only subsequent to the supplanting of Sir Oskatell that his rivals took the present crest, "*The Eagle and Child,*" where the eagle is represented as having secured his prey, in token of their triumph over the foundling, whom he is preparing to devour. This crest, with the motto "SANS CHANGER," the descendants of Sir John Stanley, the present Earls of Derby, continue to hold: the foregoing narrative shewing faithfully the origin of that singular device.

THE

BLACK KNIGHT OF ASHTON.

" O Jesu! for thy mercies' sake,
And for thy bitter passion,
Save us from the axe of the Tower,
And from Sir Ralph of Assheton!"

THE

BLACK KNIGHT OF ASHTON.

It would be a curious enquiry, to trace the origin of services and other customs, paid by tenants to their feudal sovereign. Connected as the subject is with the following tradition, it may be worth while if we attempt to throw together a few notices on that head. A rose was not a very unfrequent acknowledgment. Near to the scene of our story, the tenant of a certain farm called Lime Hurst was compelled to bring a rose at the feast of St. John Baptist. He held other lands; but they were subject only to the customary rules of the lordship, such as ploughing, harrowing, carting turves from Ashton-moss to the lord's house, leading his corn in harvest, &c. This species of service was called boon-work; and hence the old adage, "I am served like a boon-shearer." It, however, seems that some trifling present was made in return. In a MS. of receipts and disbursements belonging to the Cheethams, kept in the time of Charles II., there is an item for moneys paid for gloves to the boon-shearers at Clayton Hall, where Humphrey Cheetham, founder of the college at Manchester, then resided. The acknowledgment of a rose before mentioned might seem to have some allusion to the Knights

Hospitallers. The estate of Lime Hurst was called John of Jerusalem's land, and the tithes and rent, in all probability, once went to the support of that order.

In the Ashton pedigree, we find a Nicholas Assheton, as it was then spelt, who enrolled himself amongst these warrior-monks. It seems not improbable that the profits of this estate belonged to him.

The custom of heriotship, however, was the most oppressive, being paid and exacted from the parties at a time when they were least able to render it. Our tradition will best illustrate this remnant of barbarism, to which, even in the customs of the most savage tribes, we should scarcely find a parallel.

In the early records of the Ashton family, we find that Thomas Stavely, or Stayley, held a place called the Bestal, by paying one penny at Christmas. This bestal was, perhaps, a place of security or confinement. Adjoining the Hall-yard, the ancient residence of the Ashtons, is an old stone building facing the south, now called the Dungeon. It is flanked at the east and west corners by small towers with conical stone roofs. The wall is pierced by two pointed windows. Judging from its appearance, it must have been a place of strength; the name Bestal being probably a corruption of bastile, basilion, or bastilion,—all of which we find appropriated to places of this description. Tradition, indeed, says, the ancient lords of Ashton made this a place of confinement, when the power of life and death was at their command. A field near the old hall, still called Gallows Meadow, was then used as a place of execution.

Sir John Assheton, in the fifth year of Henry VI., became possessed of the manor on payment of one penny

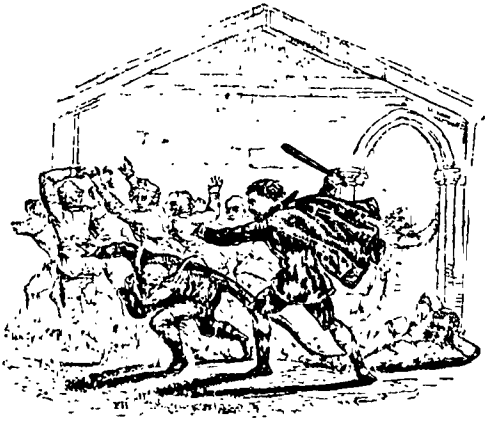
annually. He is generally supposed to have founded the church about the year 1420. We find him assigning the forms or benches to his tenants: the names for whose uses they are appointed, are all females. From this it may seem, that seats in our churches were first put up for their convenience. Eighteen forms or benches are mentioned for the occupation of one hundred wives and widows, who are named, besides their daughters and servant wenches. Their husbands had not this privilege, being forced to stand or kneel in the aisles, as the service required. In the windows, there yet remains a considerable quantity of painted glass, but very much mutilated. Three or four figures on the north side, represent a king, saints, &c. In the chancel are the coats and effigies of the Asshetons in armour, kneeling. In one part seems to have been portrayed the invention of the Holy Cross by St. Helen. At whatever period the church was built, the steeple must either have been erected afterwards, or have undergone a considerable repair in the time of the last Sir Thomas Assheton; for upon the south side are the arms of Ashton impaling Stayley. There is a tradition, that while the workmen were one day amusing themselves at cards, a female unexpectedly presented herself. She asked them to turn up an ace, promising, in case of compliance, that she would build several yards of the steeple; upon which they fortunately turned up the ace of spades. This tale may owe its origin to the following circumstance:—Upon the marriage of Sir Thomas Assheton with the daughter of Ralph Stayley, a considerable accumulation of property was the consequence. This might induce him to repair the church, and perform sundry other acts of charity and beneficence. Whilst the work was going on, Lady Elizabeth

Assheton, it is not improbable, surprised the builders at their pastime; and, giving a broad hint that a part of her money was being employed in the erection, might desire that her arms should be fixed in the steeple, impaled with those of her husband. The shape of an escutcheon, having a considerable resemblance to a spade-ace, in all likelihood was the origin of the fable.

Sir John Assheton, the founder of the church, is the reputed father of Ralph, whom the following tradition commemorates. The origin of "*Riding the Black Lad*" is involved in great obscurity,—some ascribing it to the tyranny of Sir Ralph, and others to the following circumstance, which may have been fabricated merely to throw off the odium attached to his name:—In the reign of Edward III., one Thomas Assheton fought under Queen Philippa in the battle of Neville's Cross. Riding through the ranks of the enemy, he bore away the royal standard from the Scotch king's tent, who himself was afterwards taken prisoner. King Edward, on his return from France, conferred on Thomas the honour of knighthood, with the title of Sir Thomas Assheton of Ashton-under-Line. To commemorate this singular display of valour, he instituted the custom of "riding the Black Lad" upon Easter Monday at Ashton; leaving the sum of ten shillings yearly to support it, together with his own suit of black velvet and a coat of mail. Which of these accounts is correct we cannot presume to determine. There is, however, sufficient testimony upon record to account for the dislike entertained towards the memory of Sir Ralph Assheton.

THE

BLACK KNIGHT OF ASHTON.



In the town of Ashton-under-Line, or Lime, called in the ancient rent-rolls Ashton-sub-Lima, a singular custom prevails. On Easter Monday in every year, the ceremony of "Riding the Black Lad" takes place. According to some, it is a popular expression of abhorrence towards the memory of Sir Ralph Assheton, commonly called *The Black Knight*, whose character and conduct would seem to warrant the odium thus attached to his name. The following is a brief account of the ceremony. An effigy

is made of a man in black armour, and this image is deridingly emblazoned with some emblem of the occupation of the first couple that are married in the course of the year. The Black Boy is then fixed on horseback, and after being led in procession round the town, is dismounted, made to supply the place of a shooting-butt, and all sorts of fire-arms being in requisition for the occasion, he is put to an ignominious death. Five shillings per annum is reserved from some neighbouring estate for the perpetuation of this absurd custom.

Sir Ralph Assheton was sheriff of York in the reign of Edward IV., and knight marshal and lieutenant of the Tower under Richard III., being in great esteem with the latter monarch. In the Harleian MSS. annuities are mentioned as being granted to him, with divers lordships, and a tun of wine yearly. So powerful was his jurisdiction, that a grant was made him to the effect, that if, in cases of emergency, suitable persons could not be procured for the trial of delinquents, his own authority should be a sufficient warrant for the purpose. Hence, from the nature of his office, and the powers that were intrusted to him by the king, and probably, too, from the natural bent of his disposition, arose the popular dislike which vented itself in the well-known traditionary distich we have taken as our motto.

In those days, when the gentry went little from home, set times of mirth and recreation were constantly observed in their spacious and hospitable mansions. Yule, or Christmas, was a feast of especial note and observance. The great hall was mostly the scene of these boisterous festivities; where, from the gallery, the lord of the mansion and his family might witness the sports, without

being incommoded by the uncouth and rustic manners of their guests. It was the custom to invite all who were in any way dependent on the proprietor, and who owed him suit and service.

The mansion of Sir Ralph had, like those of the neighbouring gentry, its lofty and capacious hall. At one end was a gallery resting on the heads of three or four gigantic figures carved in oak, perhaps originally intended as rude representations of the ancient Caryatides.

The Christmas but one following the elevation of Richard to the throne, in the year of our redemption 1483, was a season of unusual severity. Many tenants of Sir Ralph were prevented from assembling at the Yule feast. A storm had rendered the roads almost impassable, keeping most of the aged and infirm from sharing in this glorious pastime.

The Yule log was larger than ever, and the blaze kept continually on the roar. No ordinary scale of consumption could withstand the attacks of the enemy, and thaw the icicles from his beard.

The wassail-bowl had gone freely about, and the company, Hobbe Adamson, Hobbe of the Leghes, William the Arrowsmith, Jack the Woodman, Jack the Hind, John the Slater, Roger the Baxter, with many others, together with divers widows, of those who owed service to their lord, clad in their holiday costume, black hoods and brown jackets and petticoats, were all intent upon their pastimes, well charged with fun and frolic. Their mirth was, however, generally kept within the bounds of decency and moderation by a personage of great importance, called the Lord of Misrule, who, though not intolerant of a few coarse and practical jokes upon occasion,

was yet, in some measure, bound to preserve order and decorum, on pain of being degraded from his office. To punish the refractory, a pair of stone hand-stocks was commonly used, having digit-holes for every size, from the paws of the ploughman to the taper fingers of my lady's maiden. This instrument was in the special keeping of the dread marshal of these festivities.

The custom of heriotship, or a fine payable on the death of the landholder to the feudal lord, was then, in most cases, rigorously exacted. This claim fell with great severity upon widows in poor circumstances, who were, in too many instances, thus deprived of their only means of subsistence. Then came fees and fines to the holy church, so that the bereaved and disconsolate creature had need to wish herself in the dark dwelling beside her husband. Sir David Lindsay may not be unaptly quoted in illustration of this subject. His poem called "The Monarch," contains the following frightful picture of the exactions and enormities committed on these defenceless and unoffending victims of their rapacity:—

"And also the vicar, as I trow,
Will not fail to take a cow,
And uppermost cloths, though babes them an,
From a poor seely husbandman,
When he lyes ready to dy,
Having small children two or three,
And his three kine withouten mo,—
The vicar must have one of tho,
With the gray cloke that covers the bed,
Howbeit that they be poorly cled:
And if the wife die in the morn,
And all the babes should be forlorn,
The other cow he takes away,
With her poor cote and petycote gray·

And if within two days or three
The eldest child shall happen to dye,
Of the third cow he shall be sure,
When he hath under his cure;
And father and mother both dead be,
Beg must the babes without remedy.
They hold the corse at the church style,
And there it must remain awhile,
Till they get sufficient surety
For the church right and duty.
Then comes the landlord perforce,
And takes to him the fattest horse;
Poor labourers would that law were down,
Which never was founded by reason.
I heard them say, under confession,
That this law was brother to oppression."

As it drew on towards eventide, the mirth increased. The rude legendary ballads of Sir Lancelot of the Lake, Beavois of Southampton, Robin Hood, The Pindar of Wakefield, and the Friar of Fountain's Abbey, Clim of the Clough, Ranulph of Chester, his Exploits in the Holy Land, together with the wondrous deeds of war and love performed by Sir Roger of Calverly, had been sung and recited to strange and uncouth music. Carols, too, were chanted between whiles in a most unreverend fashion. A huge Christmas pie, made in the shape of a cratch or cradle, was placed on the board. This being accounted a great test of orthodoxy, every one was obliged to eat a slice, lest he should be suspected of favouring the heretical tenets then spreading widely throughout the land. Blind-man's-buff and hot-cockles had each their turn: but the sport that seemed to afford the most merriment, was a pendulous stick, having an apple at one end, and on the other a lighted candle, so that the unfortunate and liquor-

ish wight, who bit at this tempting bait, generally burnt his nose on the rebound, as the stick bounced to and fro on its pivot. The hall was now cleared for the masks. In this play, the Black Knight himself generally joined, laughing heartily at and hurrying on the mishaps of the revellers. Many horrible and grotesque-looking shapes and disguises soon made their appearance; but one, more especially than the rest, excited no slight degree of distress and alarm. His antics proved a continual source of annoyance to the rest of the company. He singed Will the Arrowsmith's beard, poured a whole flagon of hot liquor in the wide hosen of Hobbe Adamson; but the enactor of St. George in a more especial manner attracted his notice: he crept between his legs, and bore him right into the middle of the pigsty, before he could be stayed; from whence the heroic champion of England issued, sorely shent with the admixtures and impurities of the place.

This termagant was a little broad-set figure, wearing a mask intended as a representation of his Satanic majesty, adorned with a huge pair of horns. From it hung a black cloak or shirt, out of which protruded a goodly and substantial tail. No one could discover this ruthless disturber of their sports. Every attempt was unavailing; he shot through their fingers as though they had been greased, and a loud and contumelious laugh was the only reward of their exertions.

In the end, a shrewd conjecture went abroad, that he was none other than some malicious imp of darkness, let loose upon their frolics, to disquiet and perplex their commemoration of the Blessed Nativity. Yet was it an unusual occurrence upon Yule night, when these disturbers

were supposed to be prevented from walking the earth, being confined for a space to their own kingdom. But the desperate character of their lord, who was thought to fear neither man nor devil, might in some sort account for this unwelcome intrusion.

The guests grew cautious. Whispers and unquiet looks went round, while the little devil would ever and anon frisk about, to the great detriment and dismay of his companions.

Their lord's presence was anxiously looked for. The ruddy glow of their mirth had become dim. Sir Ralph, they hoped, would either unmask this mischievous intruder, or eject him from the premises; he having the credit of being able to master aught in the shape of either mortal or immortal intelligences.

At length he came clad in his usual suit of black velvet. A swarthy and ill-favoured wight he was, with a beard, as the story goes, that would have swept off the prickly gorse-bush in its progress. He was received with a great show of humility, and all made their best obeisance. But this deputy, representative, or vicegerent of "Old Hornie," he stood erect, among the obsequious guests, in a posture not at all either respectful or becoming.

"Now, knaves, to your sport. Ye be as doleful as a pack of pedlars with a full basket after the fair. I 'll make ye play, and be merry too: or, e' lady, ye shall taste of the mittens. Dan, give these grim-faced varlets a twinge of the gloves there, just to make 'em laugh."

His tyrannous and overbearing temper would even make them merry by compulsion. But the terrified hearers did not manifest that intense feeling of gratifi-

cation which this threat was intended to produce. Each looked on the face of his neighbour, hoping to find there some indication of the felicity which his own had failed to exhibit.

The countenance of their chief grew more dark and portentous. Just as they were expecting the full burst of his fury, up trotted the merry imp, and irreverently crept behind Sir Ralph. Before their almost incredulous eyes, did he lay hold on the tail of the knight's cloak, and twisting it round his arm, by a sudden jerk he brought this dignified personage backwards upon the floor. The oaken beams trembled at this unlooked-for invasion of their repose. Deep, deadly, and abominable curses rung through the hall. Livid and ghastly by turns, the knight's features wore that ludicrous expression of rage and astonishment more easy to conceive than to portray. Volleys of oaths and inarticulate sounds burst out from his wrath, almost too big for utterance. When reinstated in that posture which is the distinctive characteristic of man, he did not attempt to administer his vindicative retribution by proxy. Laying hold on a tough cudgel, he gave it one ominous swing, describing an arc of sufficient magnitude to have laid an army prostrate. He then pursued the luckless emissary of the Evil One, roaring and foaming with this unusual exertion. There was now no lack of activity. A hawk among the chickens, or a fox in a farm-yard, were nothing to it. Sometimes was seen the doughty Sir Ralph driving the whole herd before him, like a flock of sheep; but the original cause of the mischief generally contrived to mingle with the rabble rout, who in vain attempted to rid themselves of his company. The knight was not over nice in the just adminis-

tration of his discipline. Often, when he thought himself near enough for its accomplishment, he aimed a terrific blow, but shot wide of the mark, bringing down the innocent and unoffending victims, who strewed the floor like swaths behind the mower. Whenever a lucky individual could disentangle himself from his comrades, he darted through the door, and, in spite of the storm and pitchy darkness without, thought himself too happy in escaping with a few holes in his skin. Yet he of the horns and tail, by some chance or another, always passed unhurt; a hideous laugh accompanying the adroit contrivances by which he eluded the cudgel.

The hall was now but scantily supplied with guests; the runaways and wounded having diminished the numbers to some half score. A parley was now sounded by the victorious and pursuing enemy.

"Hold, ye lubberly rascals! Ye scum—ye recrement—why do ye run?" said the knight, puffing with great vigour. "I say, why run ye?" brandishing his club. "Bring hither that limb of Satan, and ye shall depart every one to his home. Lay hold of him, I tell ye, and begone."

But these terms of capitulation were by no means so easy to accept as the proposer imagined.

The first mover of the mischief had gotten himself perched on a projecting ledge by the gallery, from whence they were either unable or unwilling to dislodge him.

"How!" said the knight. "Ye are afraid, cowards, I trow. Now will I have at thee, for once. I'll spoil thy capering!" This threat was followed by a blow aimed at the devoted representative from the infernal court; but it

failed to dismount him, for he merely shrunk aside, and it was rendered harmless. Another, and a more contumelious laugh, announced this failure. Even the Black Knight grew alarmed. The being was surely invulnerable. He stayed a moment ere he repeated the attack, when, to his unspeakable horror and astonishment, there issued a thin squeaking voice from underneath the disguise.

"The heriot, Sir Ralph—the heriot! We'll have a heriot at Easter!"

Had a thunderbolt fallen at his feet, the knight could not have been more terrified. He let the weapon fall. His hands dropped powerless at his side. His countenance was like the darkly-rolling sea, strangely tossed by some invisible tempest. The cause of this sudden and unexpected termination of the assault we will now proceed briefly to unfold.

The morning of this day, being the eve of the Blessed Nativity, had been employed by the Black Knight in the laudable occupation of visiting a poor widow; who, though recently bereaved of her husband, had not rendered the customary heriot. Unfortunately, the only valuable she possessed was a cow, the produce of which formed the chief support of the family; four young children, and a boy of about fourteen, whose brains were generally supposed more or less oddly constructed than those of his neighbours, depended on this supply for their daily support. Cold, bitter cold was the season, and it had set in with more than common severity. Day after day the payment was delayed. Every morning the widow and her son fondled the poor beast, as though it were the last; but another morning and evening succeeded. Supper

could not supply the place of breakfast, nor breakfast contend against the wants of supper; and how could the already half-famished ones be sustained, when their only resource should be taken away?

"Go down upon your knees, Will., and thank God for another morning's meal. It is the eve of our blessed Lord's incarnation, and I think He will not leave us to perish in this world, who has made such a bountiful provision for our well-being in the next. The knight has not sent for the heriot, and I think that He alone who succours the widow and the fatherless, can have inclined his heart to mercy."

Scarcely were the thanksgivings finished, when they were alarmed by the rapid approach of their persecutor. The door flew open, and in thundering accents the Black Knight himself came to make his demand.

"I'll have thee to the dungeon, hag, for lack of service. How comes it to pass the heriot is not paid?"

The widow made no reply. Her heart was full.

"See to it," continued the pitiless churl; "for if thy quittance be not forthcoming, and that in haste, I'll turn thee and thy brats into the moor-dikes, where ye may live upon turf and ditch-water, if it so please ye."

"Oh, ha' pity!" But the widow's prayer was vain. The Black Knight was never known to hearken either to pity or persuasion.

"Thy cow—thy cow! This night let it be rendered. Sir Ralph Assheton never uttered a threat that fell to the ground."

"Mother," said the boy, "is this Sir Ralph, our liege lord?"

"Ay, fool," angrily replied the knight. "And what may thy wits gather by the asking?"

"And will *he* ever die, mother?"

"Hush, Willy," said the terrified woman.

"Nay," returned the leering half-wit, "I was but a thinking, that if he does, may be *his* master too will want a heriot."

"And what may be the name of my master?" said Sir Ralph, with a furious oath.

"The devil," replied the boy, with apparent unconcern.

"Ay,—and what will they give him, dost think?"

"*Thee!*"

Whether the peculiar expression of the lad's face, or the fearless indifference of his address, so unusual to that of the crouching slaves he generally met with, contributed to the result, we know not; but, instead of correcting the boy for his audacity, he hastily departed, finally repeating his threat of punishment in case of disobedience.

When Sir Ralph got home, his ill-humour vented itself with more severity than usual. On joining the sports, he was at the first somewhat startled, on perceiving a representation of the personage which the morning's conversation had by no means prepared him to recognise either with admiration or respect. Still, as it was nothing out of the common usage, he took no apparent notice, farther than by remarking the general gloom that prevailed, contrary to the usual course of these festivities. Then came the unlooked-for aggression upon his person, provoking his already irritated feelings into vehement action. But, when the last unfortunate blow had failed in its purpose, appearing to the furious knight to have been warded off by a charm, a sudden misgiving came across him, which, with the speech of this supposed imp of darkness,

so strangely alluding to his adventure with the boy,—wrought powerfully upon his now excited imagination, so that he stood aghast, unable to grapple with its terrors. He hastily departed from the hall,—leaving the enemy in undisputed possession of the field.

What occurred subsequently we are not told, save that on the following morning the widow's heriot was sent back, with an ungracious message from the knight, shewing his unwillingness to restore what terror only had wrung from him.

The person who adventured this dangerous personification of the Evil One was never known. Whether some bold and benevolent individual, interposing on behalf of the fatherless and famishing little ones,—or some being of a less substantial nature,—whether one of those immortal intelligences, of a middle order between earth and heaven, who at that time were supposed to take pleasure in tormenting the vicious and unworthy,—is more than our limited capacities can disclose.

It is said, that on Easter Monday following the Black Knight died; and though, probably, it had no connexion with the circumstances we have related, yet was his decease a sufficiently strange event in the mysterious chapter of coincidences to warrant this memorial.

FAIR ELLEN OF RADCLIFFE.

Drawn by H. Pickering

Engraved by Edw.d Finden.

RATCLIFFE TOWER.

London Published 1st Longman & Co 1829

FAIR ELLEN OF RADCLIFFE.

In *Percy's Relics*, this ballad is called "The Lady Isabella's Tragedy," and is thus introduced:—

"This ballad is given from an old black-letter copy in the Pepys Collection, collated with another in the British Museum, H. 263, folio. It is there intitled 'The Lady Isabella's Tragedy, or the Step-Mother's Cruelty; being a relation of a lamentable and cruel murther, committed on the body of the Lady Isabella, the only daughter to a noble Duke, &c. To the tune of "The Lady's Fall."' To some copies are annexed eight more modern stanzas, intitled 'The Duchess' and Cook's Lamentation.'"

Dr. Whitaker says, "The remains of Radcliffe Tower prove it to have been a manor-house of the first rank. It has been quadrangular; but two sides only remain." A license to kernel and embattle, shews the date of its erection, or rather rebuilding, to be in the fourth year of Henry IV., by James Radcliffe, who, we find by the pedigree, was the eldest son of William Radcliffe. He married Joan, daughter to Sir John Tempest of Bracewell, in the county of York.

"The noble old hall is forty-three feet two inches in length, and in one part twenty-six feet, in another twenty-eight feet, in width. The two massy principals which support the roof are the most curious specimens of ancient wood-work I have ever seen. The broadest piece of timber is two feet seven inches by ten inches. A wall-plate on the outside of one beam, from end to end, measures two feet by ten inches. The walls are finished at the square with a moulded cornice of oak." "At the bottom of this room, is a door opening into one of the towers, the lower part of which only remains, of massy grout work, and with three arches, each furnished with a funnel or aperture like a chimney. On the left side of the hall, are the remains of a very curious window-frame of oak, wrought in Gothic tracery, but square at top. Near the top of the hall, on the right, are the remains of a door-way, opening into what was once a staircase, and leading to a large chamber above the kitchen, the approach to which was by a door of massy oak, pointed at the top."

"Over the high tables of ancient halls (as is the case in some college halls at present) it was common to have a small aperture, through which the lord or master could inspect, unseen, what was going on below. But in this situation at Radcliffe is a ramified window of oaken work, opening from the apartment above mentioned, but now closed up. This consists of eight arches, with trefoil-pointed tops 4 and 4, with two narrower apertures above.

"To this place and family are attached the tradition and ballad given by Dr. Percy, under the name of Isabella, but here applied to a Lord Thomas and Faire Ellenor, father and daughter, whose figures are supposed to be

graven on a slab in the church, which the common people, concluding, I suppose, from its whiteness, that it was meant as an emblem of the innocence it is said to cover have mutilated by breaking off small fragments, as amulets for the prevention or cure of disorders. Traditions, always erroneous in their circumstances, are yet rarely devoid of foundation; and though the pedigrees of Radcliffe exhibit no failure of the family by the premature death of an heiress; though the last Richard de Radcliffe, who had daughters only, certainly did not make 'a scullion boy the heir of all his land,' when he settled it on Radcliffe Baron Fitzwalter; though the blood actually pointed out on the kitchen floor, where this Thyestæan banquet is said to have been prepared, deserves no more regard than many other stories and appearances of the same kind; yet we are not to discard as incredible the tradition of a barbarous age, merely because it asserts the sacrifice of a young and beautiful heiress to the jealousy or the avarice of a stepmother. When this is granted, the story of the pie with all its horrors may safely be ascribed to the inventive genius of a minstrel. On the whole, Radcliffe is a place, which, not only from its antiquity and splendour, but from the great families which have branched out from it, and the romantic tradition attached to it, can scarcely be surveyed without enthusiasm, or quitted without regret."

There is a story of its being haunted by a black dog; but as this apparition has never been seen by two persons in company, it may safely be ascribed to the genius of fear, quite as creative a power as any other faculty of the imagination.

We have thought it best to give the ballad entire, without any embellishments of our own. Though not in the best style of these metrical romances, it is still of sufficient interest, from its connexion, to claim a place in the "Traditions" of the county.

FAIR ELLEN OF RADCLIFFE.

THERE was a lord of worthy fame,
And a hunting he would ride,
Attended by a noble traine
Of gentrye by his side.

And while he did in chase remaine,
To see both sport and playe,
His ladye went, as she did feigne,
Unto the church to praye.

This lord he had a daughter deare,
Whose beauty shone so bright,
She was beloved both far and neare
Of many a lord and knight.

Fair Ellen was this damsel call'd,
A creature faire was she;
She was her father's only joye,
As you shall after see.

Therefore her cruel stepmother
Did envye her so much,
That daye by daye she sought her life,
Her malice it was such.

She bargain'd with the master-cook,
To take her life awaye:
And, taking of her daughter's book,
She thus to her did saye:—

Go home, sweet daughter, I thee praye,
Go hasten presentlie;
And tell unto the master-cook
These wordes that I tell thee:

And bid him dresse to dinner streight
That fair and milk-white doe,
That in the parke doth shine so bright,
There 's none so faire to showe.

This ladye, fearing of no harme,
Obey'd her mother's will;
And presentlye she hasted home,
Her pleasure to fulfill.

She streight into the kitchen went,
Her message for to tell;
And there she spied the master-cook,
Who did with malice swell.

Nowe, master-cook, it must be soe,
Do that which I thee tell:
You needes must dresse the milk-white doe
Which you do knowe full well.

Then streight his cruell bloodye hands
He on the ladye layd,
Who quivering and shaking stands,
While thus to her he sayd:—

Thou art the doe that I must dresse,
See here, behold my knife;
For it is pointed, presently
To ridd thee of thy life.

O then, cried out the scullion-boye,
As loud as loud might bee,
O save her life, good master-cook,
And make your pyes of mee!

For pityes sake do not destroye
My ladye with your knife;
You know shee is her father's joye,
For Christe's sake, save her life.

I will not save her life, he sayd,
Nor make my pyes of thee;
Yet, if thou dost this deed bewraye,
Thy butcher I will bee.

Now when this lord he did come home
For to sit downe and eat,
He called for his daughter deare
To come and carve his meat.

Now sit you downe, his ladye say'd,
O sit you downe to meat;
Into some nunnery she is gone,
Your daughter deare forget.—

Then solemnlye he made a vowe,
Before the companie,
That he would neither eat nor drinke
Until he did her see.

O then bespake the scullion-boye,
With a loud voice so hye—
If now you will your daughter see,
My lord, cut up that pye:

Wherein her flesh is minced small,
And parched with the fire;
All caused by her step-mother,
Who did her death desire.

And cursed bee the master-cook,
O cursed may he bee!
I proffer'd him my own heart's blood,
From death to set her free.—

Then all in black this lord did mourne,
And, for his daughter's sake,
He judged her cruell stepmother
To be burnt at a stake.

Likewise he judged the master-cook
In boiling lead to stand;
And made the simple scullion-boye
The heire of all his land.

THE

ABBOT OF WHALLEY.

"Earl Percy there his ancyent spred,
The half-moone shining all soe faire;
The Norton's ancyent had the crosse,
And the five wounds our Lord did beare."

THE RISING IN THE NORTH.

THE

ABBOT OF WHALLEY.

THE Cistertian Abbey of Whalley was founded by Henry Lacy, Earl of Lincoln, who, having given the advowson of the parish to the abbey of Stanlaw in Cheshire, the monks procured an appropriation, and removed hither in 1296, increasing their number to sixty. The parish-church is nearly coeval with the introduction of Christianity into the north of England. This foundation now became the nucleus of a flourishing establishment, "continuing," as Dr. Whitaker informs us, "for two centuries and a half to exercise unbounded charity and hospitality; to adorn the site thus chosen with a succession of magnificent buildings; to protect the tenants of its ample domains in the enjoyment of independence and plenty; to educate and provide for their children; to employ, clothe, feed, and pay many labourers, herdsmen, and shepherds; to exercise the arts and cultivate the learning of the times; yet, unfortunately, at the expense of the secular incumbents, whose endowments they had swallowed up, and whose functions they had degraded into those of pensionary vicars or mendicant chaplains."

The ruins of Whalley Abbey are situated in a beautifully sequestered spot on the banks of the Calder, presenting some of the most extensive and picturesque remains of antiquity in the county; and the site sufficiently exemplifies that peculiar instinct, if it may be so called, which guided the monks in their choice of situations. "Though the Cistertians affected to plant themselves in the solitude of woods, which were to be gradually essarted by the labour of their own hands, and though they obtained an exemption from the payment of tithes on that specific plea, yet, they were excellent judges of the quality of land, however concealed, and never set about their laborious task without the assurance of an ample recompense."

The following minute account of these ruins is from the pen of the Historian of Whalley:—"A copious stream to the south, a moderate expanse of rich meadow and pasture around, and an amphitheatre of sheltering hills, clad in the verdant covering of their native woods, beyond; these were features in the face of Nature which the earlier Cistertians courted with instinctive fondness. Where these combined, it does not appear that they ever abandoned a situation which they had once chosen; and where these were wanting, it is certain they never long or willingly remained."

"We now proceed to a particular survey of the remains of Whalley Abbey as they exist at present. First, then, the whole area of the close, containing thirty-six acres, three roods, fourteen poles, is still defined by the remains of a broad and deep trench, which surrounded it; over this were two approaches to the house, through two strong and stately gateways, yet remaining. They are constructed in that plain and substantial style which characterised

the Cistertian houses; a style which approximates to that of fortification, and shews that the monks did not obtain a licence to kernel and embattel without an end in view. Within this area, and on the verge of the Calder, which formed the south-west boundary of the close, was the house itself, consisting of three quadrangles, besides stables and offices. The first and most westerly of these was the cloister-court, of which the nave of the conventual church formed the north side; the chapter-house and vestry, yet remaining, the east; the dormitory, also remaining, the west; and the refectory and kitchens the south. The cloister was of wood, supported, as usual, upon corbels, still remaining: the area within was the monks' cemetery, and some of the ancient gravestones here are still remembered. Against the wall, on the south side of this quadrangle, is a wide surbased arch, apparently of Henry the Seventh's time, which has evidently contained the lavatory. The groove of the lead pipe which conveyed the water is still conspicuous, as is also another for the reception of a wooden rail, on which the towels hung. Beyond this court, to the east, is another quadrangular area, formed by the choir of the church on one side, the opposite side of the chapter-house, &c., on another, a line of ruinous buildings on the third, and a large distinct building, itself surrounding a small quadrangle, on the fourth. This appears evidently to have been the abbot's lodgings, for which reason, as being best adapted to the habits of an ordinary family, it immediately became the residence of the Asshetons; and after many alterations, and a demolition of its best apartments, particularly a gallery nearly 150 feet in length, has still several good and habitable rooms, and is now preserved with due care by

its owner. The ancient kitchen, the *coquina abbatis* of the *compotus*, whence such hetacombs were served up, remains, though roofless, with two huge fire-places. On the southern side of this building is a small but very picturesque and beautiful ruin mantled with ivy, which appears to have been a chapel, and was probably the abbot's private oratory. But the conventual church itself, which exceeded many cathedrals in extent, has been levelled nearly to the foundation. This work of havoc was probably an effect of that general panic which seized the lay-owners of abbeys, on the attempt made by Queen Mary to restore the monks to their cloisters.—'For now,' says Fuller, 'the edifices of abbeys, which were still entire, looked lovingly again on their ancient owners; in prevention whereof, such as possessed them for the present plucked out their eyes by levelling them to the ground and shaving from them, as much as they could, all abbey characters.'

"However, in the month of August, 1798, permission having been obtained from the guardian of the present owner to investigate the foundation by digging, a very successful attempt was made to retrieve the whole ichnography of the church, of which there were no remains above the surface to assist conjecture, or to guide research, but one jamb of the west window against the wall of the dormitory, a small portion of the south wall of the nave, a fragment of the south transept, and another jamb of one of the side chapels eastward from the last. An inequality in the ground, eastward from the transept, in an adjoining orchard, showed the half-pace into the choir, of which the outline to the north and east was also defined in the same manner. Upon these slender data we

proceeded, first, to investigate the foundations of the columns towards the west end; and having ascertained the distance of one from the south wall, the width of the south aisle, and consequently of the north, followed of course; another digging immediately to the north, ascertained the width of the middle aisle; and a third, from east to west, gave one intercolumniation: the length of the nave being already given by the remains of the transept, the number of columns was now proved. A right line drawn along the remnant of the south wall, and continued to the intersection of the nave and transept, proved the length of the latter on the south side, and, consequently, also on the north. The choir evidently appeared to have consisted of a presbytery, with two side aisles, and four other chapels; two to the north, and as many to the south.

"The site of the choir being determined, it remained to investigate its contents beneath the surface: accordingly, under the high altar, nothing appeared but a bed of undisturbed and native sand; but beneath the second half-pace, immediately leading up to it, were turned up many broken remains of a painted pavement, consisting of small glazed floor-tiles, adorned with various devices, and of different forms and dimensions. At the foot of the stalls, a narrow rectilinear filleting, of the same material, had bounded the whole. On some was inscribed the word MARIE, in Longobardic characters.

"This pavement had been deeply bedded in mortar, but was altogether displaced, and turned down from one to three feet beneath the surface, where several skeletons were found very entire, and in their original position, but without any remains of coffins, vestments, or other ornaments,

as appeared upon a most minute investigation. These, however, were beyond a doubt the abbots of Whalley. From the confused state of the original pavement, the whole floor of the presbytery, from the foot of the stalls, appeared to have been successively covered with grave-stones, all of which, however, had been removed, excepting fragments of two: one of these had a groove, once inlaid with a filleting of brass, and the other, beneath which lay the skeleton of a tall and robust man, had deeply cut upon it the stump of a tree raguled. This I conjecture to have been a thorn, intended as a rebus upon the name of Christopher Thornber, the fifteenth abbot, who died in 1486. In this search we narrowly missed the fragments of the grave-stone of Abbot Lindley, which were casually turned up on this very spot, A. D. 1813. On one, in the Longobardic character of Edward the Third's time, were the letters IOꝑ, and on the other AJ ꝑVIV.

"From these data, slender as they may seem, I arrive at my conclusion, thus:—First, None but Abbots were interred in the high choir; Secondly, The characters cannot be later than the latter end of Edward the Third, when the old English black letter was substituted in its place. From the foundation to this time, three Johns had been abbots of Whalley; Belfield, Topeliffe, and Lindley. The termination of the surname must have immediately preceded the word *hujus;* but the letters AJ can only have formed the termination of Lindelai, the old orthography of the word.

"The remains of the Lacies, wherever deposited, after their removal from Stanlaw, had undoubtedly been preserved with religious reverence, and inclosed in magnificent

tombs. But in these researches there were no appearances which justified even a conjecture that we had discovered them."*

John Paslew, the last abbot of Whalley, appears, by a reference to his arms, to have been of the Paslews of Wiswall. The first twenty years after his election were passed, like those of his predecessors, in the duties of his choir, in the exercise of hospitality, in attention to the extensive possessions of his house, or in the improvement of his buildings; but a storm was approaching, before which, either his conscience or his bigotry prevented him from bending, and which precipitated his ruin and that of the abbey. The religious houses in general were now greatly relaxed in discipline, and many of them dreadfully corrupted in morals. What was the state of Whalley must now be left to conjecture, though charity should incline us to think no evil to those against whom no specific evidence appears. The Pilgrimage of Grace was now commenced, and Paslew seems to have been pushed into the foremost ranks of the rebellion; when this expedition ended in the discomfiture and disgrace of its promoters, every art of submission and corruption was vainly employed to ward off the blow. Paslew was arraigned for high treason, tried and condemned, and is supposed to have been interred in the north aisle of the parish church, under a stone yet remaining; the ignominious part of his sentence being remitted, out of respect to his order.

"The attainder of an abbot was understood, however rightly, by the crown lawyers of that time, to infer a

* Whitaker's Hist. Whalley.

forfeiture of the house; and accordingly, without the form of a surrender, the abbey of Whalley, with all its appurtenances, was instantly seized into the king's hands; and thus fell this ancient foundation.

"Fr. Thomas Holden, younger son of Gilbert Holden, of Holden, gent., was, in all probability, the last surviving monk. On the dissolution, he appears to have returned to his native place. In 1550, we meet with his name as Sir Thomas Holden, curate of Haslingden; and in 1574 he was licensed to the same cure at the metropolitical visitation of Archbishop Grindall, held at Preston, by the style of Thomas Holden, clerk, of sober life and competent learning. Strange as it may seem, we find the last surviving monk of Whalley a protestant minister, thirty-seven years after its dissolution!"

THE

ABBOT OF WHALLEY.

It was in the dark month of November, when the brown leaves are fluttering on the ground, when the wind comes mournfully through the bare woods, and the hollow nooks and quiet cayes respond with their mystic voice, that two travellers were seen loitering up the grand avenue that swept nobly through the western embattled gateway of Whalley Abbey. The foremost of them wore a low-crowned cap, simply decorated with a heron's plume, and a doublet of mulberry-coloured velvet, puffed out capaciously at the shoulders. Trunk-hose of a goodly diameter, and wide-flapped boots, decorated the lower extremity of his person. On his left hand he bore a hooded falcon. The jesses were of crimson and yellow silk, its legs fancifully adorned with little bells fastened by rings of leather. These made a jingling and dissonant music as it flew, being generally tuned one semitone below another, that they might be the more sonorous, considering their small size. The bearer wore a pair of stout leathern mittens, and he carried a long pole, to aid

him, as it might seem, in the chase. His manner bespoke him above the ordinary rank; and his garb, from the minute regulations then existing in regard to dress, shewed at any rate his pretensions to nobility. This proud cavalier was followed by one servant only, who carried a capacious wallet, not over well replenished with provision, as was apparent from its long lank shape and attenuated proportions. His master's cloak was slung on the other shoulder; and his belt displayed some implements that appeared alike formidable as means of offence or defence.

Eventide was then drawing on; but it did not appear that the falcon had been loosed to the game: the usual tokens of success were wanting—the torn and bloody carcasses that marked an abundant sport. Two or three of the brethren were sitting on a bench in the gateway. In passing by, the foremost of the strangers hastily addressed his follower.

"Ralph Newcome, plague on thee! hast thou had a call again at the wallet? Thou guzzling tinder-throat, thy drouth is never slaked!"

Now Ralph, having felt sore oppressed with the weight of sundry leathern bottles, loaves, and wedges of cold meat, had taken especial care to lighten his back, and load his stomach, whenever the occasion was urgent. His endeavours had not been without success; for the wallet, as we have seen, hung from his shoulders, long, narrow, and unfurnished, save with the scraps and relics of many a savoury junket.

"Coming, master," was the reply, sufficiently audible for his master's ear; the remainder escaped in a sort of grumble, the dregs of his ill humour at the interruption.

The sportsman, if such he was, gained a ready admittance into the abbey inclosure. Passing round the north transept of the church, he made the best of his way to the abbot's house, where Paslew dwelt in great state, keeping a separate establishment, and a numerous train of domestics and officials.

Paslew was in some respects a man of parsimonious habits; and though his bounty might now be the better excused, yet in the more prosperous days of his dominion he had the character of a selfish and greedy priest, whose charity was less than that of his predecessor, and his personal expenses double.

Encouraged by the "Pilgrimage of Grace," as it was then called, headed by one Aske, a gentleman of but mean pretensions, who yet possessed the art of making himself popular with the vulgar, Paslew, though apparently taking no open part in the rebellion, had with his monks repossessed their ancient seat, from which they had been driven by the decrees of Henry VIII.

The rebel army had their camp at Doncaster, where the Archbishop of York and the Lord D'Arcy openly espoused their cause, receiving in great state a herald from the king's army, who came to negotiate with these dangerous malcontents. They had formed high notions of their own power and importance, and entertained sanguine hopes of success, especially since the Duke of Norfolk, a supporter of the ancient religion, was appointed to the command of the royal forces along with the Earl of Shrewsbury. The monks made themselves certain that the result would be a complete purification of heresy from the land, or at least, that measures would be adopted for the purpose of forcing Henry to a restitution of their rights. So fully

established were they in this opinion, that, as we have just seen, some of them took possession of their ancient inheritances, without the tedious formality of awaiting a fresh grant from the king.

The rebel army, being allured by Norfolk with vain promises of satisfaction, were now dispersed, though with the understanding that another assemblage should take place at a given notice, for which purpose beacons were erected at convenient distances throughout the north. By these means their forces could again be mustered with the greatest security and despatch.

Within this interval our narrative begins. Paslew had received some communication from the leaders of the Pilgrimage; but he seemed wishful to procrastinate, hoping, perhaps, he should be spared the necessity of any more direct treasonable demonstrations, by the timely submission of the king; yet his aid was of too much importance to be neglected.

The stranger, on his introduction, was received with some ostentation, and not a little ceremony. They were evidently unknown to each other; but the keen glance of the abbot instantly detected the signal for some secret message. Paslew was habited in the Cistertian gown, and scapulary of white cloth. His eye was dark, but restless; his lips, drawn in, were narrow and compressed, shewing the curbed impetuosity of his spirit. Either as a churchman or a warrior, he seemed fitted for daring enterprise; yet was he of a wary and cautious bearing, a characteristic which his monkish education had in all probability thrown over his natural temperament. The attendants having departed, the stranger drew an unsealed letter from his bosom.

"A written message, my lord abbot, from the Abbot of Kirkstall. 'T is now for your reverence's private regard, afterwards at your discretion." The abbot hastily glanced over this piece of quaint and formal latinity, occasionally darting a rapid and penetrating look at his visitor.

"He says not aught regarding so goodly a messenger," said Paslew carelessly.

"I should have marvelled if he had," returned the other, with a contemptuous smile. "He knew not of so important a personage, when that epistle was elaborated from his pen."

"How?" said the abbot, his features gathering into a portentous scowl.

"Nay, I beseech your reverence's grace, that you throw off all such disturbed apprehensions; for in troth a messenger of my bearing and capacity were worth a knight's ransom in these evil days, when the monks may not abroad with safety."

"Speak out. Remember, I have yet the power to punish both insolence and treachery."

The abbot's lip curled upwards, pale and quivering with rage, not unmixed with apprehension.

"Gramercy," said the stranger, with a provokingly careless expression of cool and contemptuous defiance—"I cry you none—I am at present nameless. To work, to work, lord abbot. Thou hast holden back too long; and there is a shrewd suspicion abroad of thine integrity in the good cause. Hold," said he, rising, as the reverend prelate was on the point of summoning his attendants. "I am not thy prisoner!—Impotent, I would crook my finger thus, and thou shouldest crouch at my bidding. Nay, these be evil days, I say again; and more strange

things may come to pass than bearding a lordly abbot in his den!"

Great was the astonishment of Paslew. The stranger stood proudly erect; his arms were folded, and a withering glance shot from beneath his brows. Even John Paslew, unused to a sense of inferiority before his fellow-men, felt cowed before him. For the first time, in all likelihood, he knew not how or what to answer. The stranger interrupted this painful silence.

"Since the monks are forbidden to be out a-gadding, the cowl and scapulary might have found some hindrance over the moors from Kirkstall. With my hawk and bearing-pole, I can follow on to the sport without let or question." The latter part of this speech seemed to throw some light on the purpose for which this messenger had been selected. Paslew was preparing for a further enquiry, when he was again interrupted.

"I tell thee, a courier of my condition may go free, though nameless. But to business—Norfolk is tampering with our credulity. He thinks to gain our time to his advantage: but the work must again be urged forward. Yet lack we thy aid. May we depend on its being faithfully rendered? We must have no lukewarm allies in the rear of our camp."

The stranger drew from beneath his inner vest a crucifix, with the representation of a chalice and of the five wounds of Christ.

Paslew kissed the token, and his suspicions were at rest. But still, there was a dubiety and hesitation in his manner, displeasing to the stranger. He would bind himself to no distinct pledge respecting the time of his appearance at the rebel camp; and altogether seemed to

display either cowardice or a want of cordiality. His guest refusing to stay the night, on a pretext of urgent business farther north, departed soon after the termination of their interview.

The night was fast closing when the strangers left the abbey. One by one, the pale stars seemed to start out, as if just lighted up in the blue vault. The dark woods threw their giant arms around the sacred domain, as though to guard it against unhallowed intrusion. The travellers had gained the steep ascent towards the south-east, from whence the river, winding down the narrow valley, seemed as if here and there a spark was floating on its quiet surface —the lights, gliding on the opposite brink, fell distinct and unbroken upon the stream. The soft voice of the current grew strangely audible, in contrast with the deep silence; the wind rolling it round to the ear at intervals, startling and abrupt.

Preceded by a guide, they had taken the rough mountain road, leading from the abbey into the forest of Pendle, the stranger and his servant still walking, or rather climbing, for their journey could only be accomplished on foot. Having proceeded about two miles on this rugged path, they diverged to the left, where the only indication to assist their guide was the turf-cutter's track, and a few heaps of stones, scarcely distinguishable from the common mass, but by an eye accustomed to these land-marks. Carefully were they sought for at times, the blazing torch carried by their leader being often requisite for the search.

They now descended by a narrow and steep ravine, the termination of which brought them to a small brook. This they crossed, and again commenced a sharp and

troublesome ascent. The mighty Pendle rose up before them, huge and dark, engrossing half the hemisphere. To this point, it seemed, their path was directed. The guide now trimmed his torch, the smoke from which had for some time been rather an accompaniment than an assistance to their toil, as it caused them to loiter at an inconvenient distance, thereby enhancing the difficulties they had to encounter. Slow and toilsome was their progress, yet a patient continuance in any path will sooner or later lead to the end. The brow of the hill seemed rapidly diminishing; the abrupt steep was at length gained, when the whole glorious garniture of the heavens, uninterrupted from that majestic height, was suddenly revealed. True, it was a November night: but unusually clear and vivid; the stars seemed to burn rather than shine, so piercing was their effulgence. The vast track of the milky-way appeared to span the dark and level platform, like the bow of some triumphal arch. They seemed to stand on a huge circle, black, bare,—its verge unapproachable, contrasting deeply with the encompassing splendour. Proceeding onwards, a dark speck was visible, springing out abruptly from the verge of the horizon. Its bulk rapidly increased, their path evidently tending in that direction. A shrill whistle from the guide was now answered by a corresponding signal. Presently they were challenged by a sentinel.

"*Vale,*" growled out the rough voice of their conductor.

"Is it thou, Will.?" said the guard. "And what neck art thou fitting for the noose; breeding occupation for the hangsman, I trow."

"Not half so ripe as thine own, gossip. Here be two

gentles that have commission, I guess, to look at the beacons, to see they are in trim and properly watched. 'T is well the guard is set. Holloa, Nicholas Dewhurst, bring the flagon. I am wheezing like an old wife's bellows, nigh disinherited of my birthright, the free quaffing o' the air. I shall die and be canonized."

Will., in his eagerness to attain this glorious end, left his companions with the sentinel, who speedily conducted them into a rude hut, erected as a temporary shelter to those on the look-out for signals. In this narrow shed a lamp was burning. Two of the abbot's servants, stretched before a smouldering heap of turf, were scarcely roused by the vociferations of Will., as he strode over them in his way to the provender. A long pull, and a loud smack, announced the satisfactory relish that ensued.

"Hoa, ye lozel knaves!—who sleeps when Will.'s awake?" This reflection was accompanied by a smart blow on that part of the recumbent's person where it was most conveniently administered.

"Be gone, sot!" was the abrupt reply, not over abundantly expressive of good humour at this disturbance. Will. looked again towards the flagon; but great was his dismay on beholding it in the very act of disemboguing its precious contents into another gulf as insatiable as his own. Ralph Newcome, incited thereto by his own discrimination, together with the resistless relish of their guide, as soon as the latter had partially concluded, took up the subject, and long, powerful, and undeviating were the requisitions that he made.

"Plague on thy civility!—A fly will drink from any body's cup, and so will a Yorkshireman," growled the uncourteous churl.

Ralph had, however, braced himself tightly to the task, and stood with an air of dogged defiance, stoutly confronting his accuser,—though, being a man of few words, the principal weight of the argument rested upon Will., whose eloquence was with difficulty interrupted on any subject.

"Peace," said one of the sleepers, raising himself halfway—"I think we be like to bide here till our bones rot. There's nought but the same dun sky,—black, black, and unchanging. I should like to see a stiff blaze from some quarter. Our bundle, here, would soon be in a low."

"Hark!" said the other, "'t is something creaking amongst the faggots."

The sentinel rushed out—but the beacon was undisturbed.

"St. Mary protect us!—'T is the same noise I heard last night, and about the same hour."

The stranger here entered the hut. Enveloped in a huge cloak, he sate silent, and apparently inattentive; but the conversation was now abrupt, and broken down into short and interrupted whispers.

"I wish old Hal and his wives were here, with all my heart," said one: "we'd have a rare bonfire. How his fat paunch would swell! But for him and his unlucky women, we had been snug in the chimney corner, snoring out psalmody, or helping Old Barn'by off with the tit-bits in the kitchen."

"Hush!" said his neighbour: "There be the faggots talking again. I think they are bewitched,—Dan, look to them."

"Nay," said Dan, "they may bide awhile for me."

The words were scarcely uttered when the building seemed in a blaze. Crash upon crash followed. The inmates, stupified with terror, were well nigh suffocated ere their astonishment left them the power to escape. In the full conviction that the foul fiend had taken him at his word, Dan was dragged from the hut, wan, speechless, and gasping with affright. Nothing less, too, than a visit from his Satanic majesty in person was expected by the terrified rustics.

On gaining the outside, the whole burning mass was before them, one vast pyramid of flame. Flakes of blazing matter were hurled into the sky, with short and rapid explosions. The roar of the wind through the glowing furnace was awful and appalling. Huge and ignited fragments were borne away with frightful rapidity. They rode on the rolling volumes of smoke like fire-fiends armed with destruction; but the vast reservoir of flame still glowed on, apparently undiminished. The curtain of night seemed to be suddenly undrawn. Objects, the most minute, were visible as in the broad view of day. The brown heath, the grey and the mossy stone, were each distinguishable, but clad alike in one bright and unvarying colour, red as the roaring furnace. Soon, the great magazine of inflammable matter in the interior caught fire, and rolled out in a wide mass of light, like the first burst of a volcano.

The stranger stood with apparent unconcern, his back to the flames, looking from the brink of the mountain northward, as if on the watch for corresponding signals. Soon a bright star hung on the heights above Sawley. Increasing in splendour, another broke out on the verge of the horizon, marking the site of the camp near Romald's Moor.

Turning towards the south-west, and looking to the right, beyond the chain of successive heights that form the vale of Todmorden, he beheld a dim spark in the distance, from the summit of Hades Hill, scarcely penetrating the mist which hung like a dense cloud in that direction; this place and Thieveley Pike forming the connecting links between Pendle Hill and Buckton Castle.

The terrified attendants knew too well the results which would follow this unaccountable and irreparable mistake. The whole country would be in commotion. Hordes of zealous and fanatic idlers and malcontents would repair to the appointed rendezvous, and this premature, and perhaps fatal movement, would be attributed to their carelessness. Paslew, not over nice in discriminating their several deserts, would, doubtless, subject them to immediate and condign punishment.

These were thoughts common to each, unquestionable and conclusive; but what answer to give, or what excuse to make, was far from being decided upon with the same degree of certainty.

"We shall be hanged without mercy," was the dread sum of these uncomfortable reflections.

"I know not what you may be," said Will.; "but I intend to run for it. I've an old dame would make a sore disturbance at my death, more especially if dangling from the gallows-tree, which of all the trees in the wood hath been my aversion ever since I saw Long Tom of the Nab make so uncomfortable a shriving from thence."

"Run, then," said Nicholas, rather stoutly, and in a tone of more confidence than heretofore. "I'll stay my ground this bout; and, further, I do purpose to commit yon knaves into the holy keeping of our four-cornered

crib, where they may be indulged in recreations of another sort than setting the whole country by the ears.—'T will save our necks to slip theirs into the noose."

This happy suggestion, the whole of these honest and conscientious servants of the church were prepared to obey. They might with safety accuse the strangers; indeed, it was more than probable they had hit out the right source of the mischief: so marching up boldly to the execution of this Christian purpose, they were proceeding to lay hands on the foremost of the culprits. At this critical moment, he turned suddenly round. Perhaps from a prior suspicion of their intentions, or from the knavish cast of their countenances, he saw that hostilities were in contemplation: at any rate, he seemed to be prepared for the event. Will., being the mouthpiece of the party, and accustomed, moreover, at times, to a precise and methodical manner of delivery, was the chief speaker.

"Sir, we arrest you for high treason. You are charged with firing off beacons without our privity or consent, thereby endangering the safety of the lord Abbot, and the peaceable governing of this realm." He paused, quaking even at his own eloquence; but the stranger made no reply, till, throwing aside his cloak, he drew out a hagbut or demi-hague as it was sometimes called, being a sort of small harquebus, with its match ready kindled.

"Tell the Abbot of Whalley that neither ye nor the whole horde of drones and drivellers about his hive, shall take me against my own liberty and consent. Hold back! Your first step is your last, save to your grave! I will see the abbot shortly, but not by your grace or assistance." Saying this, he bounded down the steep, like the roused

deer, in its first pride of flight, scorning the chase. The light flashing from his weapons, marked his form rapidly receding from their grasp.

But Ralph, who as we may suppose, was minded to imitate the evolutions of his master, being it seemed of a more heavy and considerate demeanour, paused for a space ere he leapt.

This deliberation was fatal to his enterprise. The enemy, recovering from their confusion, seized him in default of his master, and without further ado bore him away as a visible acquaintance of themselves to the abbot. There could be no great harm in throwing the blame of this unlucky affair on the companion of the escaped incendiary: besides, it would be an effective lesson to him on the danger of keeping bad company.

Through bog and brake, over moor and mountain, they hurried on with their prisoner, who, dooming them all to "clootie" and his imps, and commending himself to Michael, Mary, and a number of his especial patrons in the Romish calendar, was urged forward with more than their usual speed.

The blaze had ceased to be visible when they came to the last descent towards the village. Far and wide the alarm had spread; consternation and enquiry were on every countenance. The guards were besieged with anxious faces, supplicating intelligence, and much impeded thereby in their progress to the abbey.

Outside the gates, they found a dense crowd waiting for the news. The abbot and his brethren were in close council, expecting every moment the arrival of warders from the beacon.

They were hurried into the chapter-house, together with

their prisoner, who had now taken to the sulks, refusing any reply to the numerous enquiries made by the servants who followed, eager for the final disclosure.

The room was lighted by a single lamp. Little of the interior was visible, save the grim and ascetic faces of the monks, who sat nearest to the centre of illumination. Their features, in deep masses of alternate light and shadow, looked as if carved out, hard and immovable, from the oak wainscot. Occasionally, a dull roll of the eye relieved the oppressive stillness, and the gazer would look out from the mystic world he inhabited, through these loop-holes of sense, into the world of sympathies and affections, with which he had long ceased to hold communion.

Paslew was standing when they entered. His bushy grey eyebrows threw a strange and almost unnatural shade over the deep recesses beneath, across which, at times, like the foam swept over the dark billows of the spirit, a light and glowing track was visible, marking the powerful conflict within.

"Nicholas Dewhurst, and Daniel Haydock."

He shaded his eyes from the light, as he thus addressed the foremost of the party who had just entered.

"From what quarter was the signal first visible?"

"My lord," said Dan, "we are but unworthy of your highness' grace, did we not answer truly."

"Quick!—Thou art slower to thine answers than thy words. Why tarriest thou?"

"If your highness will pardon——"

"What?" said Paslew, in a voice that made the culprits quake. "I pardon nothing. What means this silence?"

"Please your reverence," said Will., now advancing from the rear, his rhetorical flourishes somewhat curtailed, and his confidence thereby wonderfully abated, "the first signal was our own, lighted by an incendiary, to wit, and here we bring him, to your highness' reverence for judgment. We ordered the rope and the broad beam to be ready by daybreak."

It were idle to paint the astonishment and dismay which this short narrative produced. Paslew immediately saw the dangers by which he was involved. He was, by this desperate and unfortunate act, at once committed to the measures from which he had hitherto kept aloof, and he must now stand foremost in the cause, or tamely submit to the infuriate vengeance which this overt act of rebellion would inevitably hasten. He had hoped, that, sheltered in this quiet nook, he should escape without being made a party in the contest, and rest secure until hotter heads and lighter brains had fought the battles that would leave him in possession of the spoil. If the king's party were triumphant, he fancied, that, by seeming to take little or no part in the hostilities then abroad, his house might be spared in the general wreck that would ensue; but all these schemes of deep-laid policy and ambition were in a moment dissipated. No time was to be lost. The whole country would instantly be in array, and the beacon-light of Pendle proclaim Paslew as the source and instigator of this second rebellion. It would be in vain to stay the rising. Some enemy of his house, or some desperate adventurer wishful to further his own schemes at another's expense, was doubtless the author of this mischief. The whole was but the discovery of a moment. Almost before the dark thought was visible on the brow, he cried out—

"Bring forward the traitor!"

But Ralph, on the first hearing of this accusation, strode forward, even to the table, where sat the awful conclave astonished at his temerity. He stood calmly erect, surveying his judges with a countenance scarcely moved from its usually hard and stolid expression.

"If it be true," cried he, "as these idlers do aver, I am here to answer. If it be false, they must look to it."

The abbot frowned at this presumptuous speech.

"Who art thou?"

"Marry, an ass ridden by fools."

"Knave, see thou be discreet and respectful in thine answers. There be whipping-posts for knaves, and stocks for the correction of fools."

"Why, if it be for the matter of my name, I trow, 't is of an honest christian-like and well-conditioned flavour; comes out of the mouth sharp as a beer-spigot. Men call me Ralph."

"And from whence?" said the abbot impatiently.

"These knaves of thy breeding can tell best. 'T is a road I never before travelled; and, by your grace's favour, I do not mean to jog on it again."

"He is servant to the stranger yeoman, whom your worship entertained a few hours back, on some private errand," said one of the auditors.

A sharp guess at the truth raised a slight quiver on the abbot's lip. The conversation of the stranger, the anxiety he displayed, with that of his brother of Kirkstall, seemed to point out the source and cause of his disaster.

"Now, varlet, answer truly, or thou diest," said Paslew, with a significant shake of the finger. "At whose

instigation hast thou committed this foul treason against our house, and the good prospering of this realm?"

"The deed was not mine."

"Believe him not, my lord; we are upon our testimony," said the accusers.

Ralph, turning aside, met them face to face. He commenced a short but shrewd examination, as follows:

"You were a watching, I suppose?" said he, carelessly.

"Ay, were we," sharply replied three or four ready tongues.

"Then, how could I fire the beacon without your leave?" A short pause evinced their dislike to this question; but Will., more ready than discreet, soon summoned assurance to meet the enquiry, thus:—

"My lord, we had just taken them into the hut, thinking to shew them a courtesy; but that knave's throat holds more liquor than his mother's kneading-trough, or——"

"If in the hut, how could I set the beacon in a low?"

"But thou hadst a companion," hastily shouted Nicholas, finding their first position untenable.

"And how comes it to pass that ye be taking or guiding thither any person, and more particularly wayfarers, whom we know not? How comes it, I say, that ye suffer this without my permission?" said the abbot sternly.

"Will. was their guide; and we cared not to refuse your reverence's messenger."

"My messenger!" returned Paslew, with a glance that almost bent them to the ground.

"Please your highness," said Will., falling on his knees, "the stranger was a visiting of the beacons, so said he,

to know if they were carefully watched. He came to me, as with an authority from your reverence, and I mounted them up to the guard-house, unwillingly enough. 'T is a sore pull for a pair of shanks like mine."

The abbot now saw plainly into the machinations by which he had been betrayed, and reprimanding his men for their negligence, and so careless an observance of his commands, ordered them off severally to the stocks. Their lamentations were loud but unavailing, especially when they found that Ralph was simply dismissed, for a space, to solitary confinement.

Yet was Paslew still at a loss to determine whence this subtle device originated, unless from his brother of Kirkstall, and he resolved to question Ralph secretly. It was owing to this purpose, probably, that the usual summary process of executive justice was not more speedily administered.

A great marvel and gossip, as may readily be supposed, now arose throughout the whole country. Rumour, with her hundred tongues, flew fast, and her wide wings overspread the land. From all quarters, conformably to the signal, the levies marched with great rapidity to Doncaster, where they found Lord D'Arcy, who seemed to feel, or to feign, astonishment at this sudden rising without his orders. One and all proclaimed that the appointed signal was from the abbot of Whalley, at whose war-inciting torch the whole line of beacons had been kindled. A messenger, however, was soon forwarded to the camp, from Paslew, with an explanation of the affair, while at the same time he demanded their aid for the discovery and punishment of the offenders. But D'Arcy and Aske were too well pleased to see Paslew's crafty and selfish plans

frustrated, whilst he was irretrievably committed to their cause. Tired of waiting the tardy result of negotiations with their sovereign, these ambitious spirits were glad to behold their army once more menacing the royalist position, hoping it would either quicken or terminate these dilatory proceedings. But the Duke of Norfolk and the Earl of Shrewsbury, at the news of this unexpected rising, were mightily amazed. Their plans were at once terminated. Their emissaries had failed to bring intelligence, previously, of the intended gathering. In the midst of their dilemma, word was brought that the abbot of Whalley had first lighted up the blaze of insurrection. Secretly resolving that this meddling priest should sorely rue his mischievous exploit, they again found themselves unwillingly obliged to enter into fresh stipulations with their adversaries, though determining on delay, if possible, in the hope of dividing their leaders, and of extinguishing the rebellion in detail.

But we would crave the reader's return to the abbey, where Ralph was left in strict durance, and possibly in some danger from the vindictive purposes of the abbot.

Early on the following morning, he was aroused from a deep-toned and laborious stertoration, by a figure that shook him as he lay, in a somewhat unceremonious fashion. The intruder was wrapped in a thick cloak or tunic, and he stood gruffly erect, by the straw couch, whereon the prisoner's night-dreams had nestled in their first existence.

"I marvel thou sleepest so soundly! Thou art the first knave, I trow, that hast welcomed these walls with so loud a clarion."

"And what should ail the well-earned slumbers of Ralph Newcome? His sleep may be as sound as some

of those, mayhap, that have softer beds and gayer clothing."

"But the gallows, man!—Hast had no glimpse of the noose in thy night visions?"

"Peradventure the hemp is not sown that shall make my collar. When the hangsman comes, 't is time enough to wake; so, I pray thee, bereave not a poor man of the only solace the rich cannot purchase from him."

"Thou art a plain-spoken varlet, and I would but ask thy master's name and condition. Answer me straight—no equivocation, no shuffling or evasion shall serve thee; 't is a stale device now, and will not avail."

"And who art thou, friend, that hast such a greedy appetite for men's names, thou canst not rest a-bed for the craving of thy stomach?"

"I am the abbot, and thou a prisoner in this good house. Fearful odds, methinks, for the strife."

"Now hark thee, most reverend abbot, my name thou knowest, at a peradventure: but for the name of my master, as thou callest him, seeing it be a notable secret, thou mightest as well go ask his goshawk yonder, who, I guess, continues an unworthy prisoner as well as myself."

"I 'll have the truth wrung from thy tongue. Thumbscrews and iron mittens will not be denied so easily."

"Humph!" said Ralph,—"these be rare things for cracking the shell; but, for all that, I wot, they 'll not get at the kernel."

"What! defiest thou my power?—in my own custody, too?" Paslew grew pale with anger; but the impolicy of this proceeding soon suggested itself to his wary, though at times impetuous temper. Yet the stubborn

disposition of his prisoner resisted alike his cajolements and his threats.

In vain were offers of reward multiplied; nor bribe nor entreaty could avail; Paslew then left him, threatening to extract by force what milder measures had failed to elicit. He had that morning despatched a messenger to the rebel chiefs at Doncaster, with an explanation of the accident, likewise with an assurance of his good wishes to the cause; but still he delayed to go in person, or to send his quota of levies.

True, however, to his threats, if not to his promises, towards the close of the day, he again visited the dungeon. He was accompanied by two grim attendants, whom he ordered to wait outside, until their services should be required.

Ralph was striding lustily, and with evident impatience, over the damp floor; yet he scarcely seemed to notice the entrance of the abbot.

"How now!—Hast had aught, by way of special discovery, touching the name thou hadst forgotten this morning?"

"Yes, I have had a notable discovery therein," said Ralph, still holding on his pace diagonally as heretofore.

"And may we graciously participate in the result?—Doubtless 't is a comfortable and happy revelation," said the abbot.

"'T is to beware of three most unlucky things, persons, or properties, I trow,—to wit, a parson's maid, a prior's sow, and an abbot's dinner."

"And what lack they in thy honest esteem?"

"A parson's maid lacks honesty,—a prior's sow a litter,—and an abbot's dinner lacks me!"

"Or, rather, thou lackest it."

"Why, troth, I am not over nice in the disposition of vain words; nor should I be over nice in the disposal of some light scraps from your reverence's buttery."

"Thou hast not dined?"

"Peradventure not at thy cost."

"Perchance an empty stomach may be the more apt to yield. A full belly makes a stout heart."

"I know not. But hasten, I beseech thee. Thy questions over, we may make merry together. Nothing less than a full flagon and a prime haunch will suffice."

Ralph rubbed his hands at the bare idea of these prospective dainties.

"Wilt thou now disclose the name of thy master?"

"No," said Ralph;—"and now for dinner."

"Pr'ythee, in what haste?" returned Paslew, with a grin of cruel and malicious irony. "There be some slight preliminaries to adjust,—something to season thy haunch, and whet thine appetite. He stamped with his foot, and the two attendants entered, bearing instruments of uncouth and horrid appearance.

"Thou mayest spare my bones and thy gimcracks. With all thy screwing thou canst not yet squeeze rain drops from the rock."

"I cry thee favour. Thou hast dared the stroke,—thou hast courted the vengeance thou wouldest withstand, but thou shalt yield or break.—Seize him."

"Stand back, catiffs!" said Ralph, with a look of deep and unutterable scorn. "But to thee!—words would fail to express my contempt, my derision, my defiance of thy puny power! Read, and skulk back to thy cell!"

He drew from his doublet a small roll of parchment, which Paslew, with unfeigned astonishment and vexation, recognised as a safe warranty from the Archbishop of York, wherein the bearer, under whatever manner or distinction he might choose to adopt, was charged with a secret mission from the leaders of the "*Pilgrimage*," touching the success and well-being of the Catholic faith, and the prosperity of the Holy Church. All abbots, priests, and others, being true sons of the church, were called on to aid and comfort him in the due exercise of his mission, to furnish him with a safe passage, and to obey his bidding without let or question.

"Herein fail not at your peril!" said Ralph, eyeing the abbot with a glance of cool and deliberate scorn.

"Why was not this protection from his Grace given to me before?" enquired Paslew, beseechingly.

"That thy deceit and double-dealing might be the more manifest. Yesternight thou didst refuse thine aid until the beacon of insurrection should be kindled. When kindled, and upon thine own ground, too, still thou holdest back! But think not to escape!—Think not to watch in safety whilst others work. Whoever wins in this perilous game, thou wilt lose. Marked out for destruction, thine own policy will betray thee. Choose thee one party, and thou hast yet one chance of safety. But double-dealers, such as thou, do ever tumble into the trap baited by their own cunning."

"Will his Grace of York expect my presence at the camp?"

"It is needful thou make thy peace either with him or with the king," said Ralph: "yet I am bold to tell thee, that with Harry thine hope of reconciliation is past.

The news, ere this, hath reached Norfolk's ear, and the beacon-light of Pendle, the first blaze and signal of the insurrection, denounces the Abbot of Whalley as a ringleader, and as having first kindled the torch of rebellion."

With a malicious smile, cruel as the triumph of the fiend at the torments of his victim, did this mysterious foe exhibit to him the toils that had been, during his unsuspecting security, wound about him.

"Thine only hope is from his Grace; go with me, and thou mayest yet dwell in safety, and thine house be established."

Paslew saw with dismay the dark gulf which yawned on either hand, and the net so craftily prepared to entangle him. His only hope of security, however, was a prompt acquiescence in the plan pointed out by the stranger, who accordingly engaged to conduct him, without delay, to the appointed rendezvous.

Passing over the difficulties of the journey, the accidents by the way, the slips and damages of sumpter-horses, and their often trackless march over the hills, let us behold Paslew, after some narrow escapes from the royalist forces, taking up his quarters at an obscure lodging hard by the town of Doncaster, and nigh to the cantonments of the rebel chiefs, whose forces were once more in formidable array, occupying a conspicuous position on the left bank of the river Dòn.

The left wing of the royalist troops was flanked by a deep morass, called Potterie Car: and their right protected by the walls of the town.

The morning that followed Paslew's arrival was the time appointed for a general attack by the rebels, who

considerably outnumbered the more disciplined, but less zealous army of their sovereign, D'Arcy and his associates intending to cross the river by daybreak, with the utmost secresy, hoping to take the royalist forces by surprise.

Paslew arrived alone, just as the consultation of the chiefs was breaking up. His companion, Ralph, had left him some hours before, and galloped on at full speed, first giving directions as to the course he should take, and the measures he was to adopt on his arrival. Conducted in due form to the archbishop's presence, Paslew found his grace at supper. The repast was sumptuous, and served up in great state. This high dignitary seldom stirred but with his kitchen-furniture and service for the table, which last was of massy silver, beautifully wrought and embellished. His servants were apparelled in all the pomp and insignia of office; but he affected great plainness and simplicity, both of dress and demeanour. At his right hand sat a stout, muscular figure, whom Paslew immediately recognized, with unequivocal demonstrations of surprise, to be his umquhile prisoner Ralph Newcome, now habited in a plain suit of velvet, and looking like a country gentleman, of some rank and importance. His manner was, however, coarse and abrupt; and he still seemed nothing loth to sustain his full complement of liquor. On the left of the archbishop sat his nameless visitor at the abbey, whose personal accomplishments he had good cause to remember. Below them sat several chiefs of the confederacy, apparently of an inferior rank.

"Abbot Paslew," said his grace, "thou art a tardy, and it may be, undutiful son. Thine homage to the church has not been either freely or faithfully rendered; yet does

she now welcomes thee to her embrace, with the promise of a free and unconditional forgiveness."

"Ay," said he of his grace's right hand; "Abbot Paslew was of too great weight in the scale of events, to be left to choose his own side of the balance. I am right fain of his company, and in troth he can use the persuasions well, — the thumbscrews and tight boots upon occasion."

"Master Aske," replied the archbishop, "if the sons that our mother hath suckled and nourished from her own grace and bounty, were every of them as true as thou art, who yet receivest not of her temporal favours, then would her kingdom be enlarged, and her arms should outstretch to the utmost verge and compass of all visible things. But there be evil men and seducers abroad, traitors to their altar and their faith." Here he paused, but presently continued; "My friends, though our religion be meek and lowly, yet does it not deny to us the comforts but sparingly scattered through this vain and perishing world."

His grace here filled a cup of spiced sack, inviting Paslew to partake of their humble entertainment. Bewildered and intimidated, he yet obeyed with all due reverence and courtesy.

"Confusion to the heretic king!" cried he on the left of the archbishop, filling his glass, and at the same time taking especial note that the guests should repeat this bold and startling treason.

"Lord D'Arcy," said one of the guests; "thou hast imbibed that wish so oft in thy drink, that should the king catch thee, he may find it branded in thy four quarters, when they are cut up to ornament his majesty's posterns."

"And what might he find on thine, Norton?" said the fiery leader.

"A cook's rolling-pin and a mutton pasty." A loud laugh here announced the hit, of which this sally was the bearer, it being levelled directly at the well-known propensities of the personage to whom it was addressed.

"Come, friends all," said the archbishop; "let not the gibe and jest go round; there be matters of graver import that should occupy us this night. To-morrow, let the elements be propitious, and the day is won."

"Od's life," said Aske; "surely the rain will not again prevent us from passing the river, as it did in our last campaign."

"If it do," cried a deep and melancholy voice from the lower end of the table, "then will I say this Pilgrimage of Grace is the device of man, and not of God, and the work will not prosper."

This ominous anticipation seemed to strike terror into the most stout-hearted. "Foul fa' the croaking raven!" said Aske. "No good comes on't, when the Lord of Ravenswood breaks from his usual silence. Mischief follows, safe as the bolt after the flash."

"Hush! my son," said the archbishop to this bird of ill-omen; "thou speakest unwisely. 'T is not for us to adjudge the displeasure of Heaven upon slight testimonies. He trieth our faith, when the dark cloud overshadoweth His mercy. But let us not dishonour this good cause, and weaken our hands by indulging in such gloomy anticipations. The night showeth little token of a change, and when I was last abroad, the river passed on, shallow and murmuring, over the ford."

The guests were fully occupied to a late hour in dis-

cussing the plan of attack, the occupation of the town, together with subsequent arrangements; after which, with mutual anticipations of success, the company departed.

Paslew, on retiring to his chamber, though much fatigued, found himself unable to sleep. The dark chaos of events brooded heavily upon his brain. Feverish and excited, the dread to-morrow seemed already pressing on the past, mingling its deep and unseen flood with the full tide of existence. The whirl and eddy, created by the conflict, lashed his thoughts almost to madness. He grew appalled. The billows blackened as they rose. He seemed sinking, overwhelmed in the struggle, and the spirit quivered as they passed. He arose, darting an anxious glance through the low casement. The moon was riding on the top of a huge mountain of clouds, towards the north-west. As he gazed, they came rapidly athwart the heavens, like the wings of some terrible demon visibly unfolding. On a sudden, the door of his chamber flew open. He started forward to meet the intruder, but there was no footstep—no sound, save the hurrying gusts that foreran the approaching tempest. Soon, like a mighty deluge, it burst on, at once, in its full vigour, as though it would overwhelm creation once more in immediate ruin. The roll of the river answered swiftly to the tempest's voice, now swollen to a huge and foaming torrent, rising rapidly over its level banks, and threatening devastation on every side. Paslew quaked. Gloomy forebodings crept upon him. He beheld, in this strange visitation, another, and a manifest interposition of Heaven, fighting against the cause he had unhappily espoused. Rest was

out of the question, his whole thoughts being occupied in the contrivance of measures for his own immediate safety.

In the morning, consternation had seized the whole camp. They beheld the muddy and turbulent waters before them, again frustrating their hopes, levelling their proud schemes, and fighting visibly and irresistibly against them, in front of their adversaries. So intimidated were the troops, and so convinced that their cause was now hopeless, that not all the persuasions and threatenings of their leaders, nor the archbishop's promises of an eternal reward, could prevent the breaking up of this vast multitude, and the hasty dispersion of the rebel host.

Ere morning Paslew was gone. He liked not the dust from a falling house. Weary and alone, he came back to his dwelling, on the tenth day after his departure.

From this time, danger and misfortune crowded fast upon that devoted house. The dark course of events unfolded with frightful rapidity, and Paslew, by many a vain contrivance, sought to avert the king's displeasure, and his own doom. A relaxation of some measures more than ordinarily severe was attempted; and we find, from existing records, that a pension of ten marks per annum was granted to Thomas Cromwell, the king's secretary and principal visitor,—whether in the way of bribe or fee is not certain.

It shows, however, the humiliating and submissive circumstances to which the monks were now reduced. They were indeed fallen from that high estate, when kings were their tributaries, and empires too narrow for the wide grasp of their ambition. The following is a copy of

Thomas Cromwell's indulgence, taken from the Townley MSS.:—

"To all estates due honour and reverence, and to all other commendacioun in our Lord everlastyng. Know ye that we John, abbot of ye monasterie of our blessed Ladie of Whalley, in Com. Lanc., by ye assente and consente of ye convente, have freely granted untoe ye right honourable Mr. Tho. Cromwell, secretarie, general visitor, and principal official to our most sovereign Lord Kyng Hen. VIII., an annual rent or fee of vi: xiii: iv: yerele, to be paide at ye nativitie of St. John Baptist unto ye saide Maister Thomas Cromwell. Wee, ye saide abbot and convent have put to ye same our handes and common seale. Yeven at Whalley 1st Jan. 28 Hen. VIII."

But every act of submission, every stratagem and device, had failed to ward off the blow. Within ten weeks from the date of this document, there was neither abbot nor abbey of Whalley!

After the dispersion, imprisonment, and execution of the principal leaders of the rebellion, the day of reckoning and retribution was at hand. Shrewsbury, by the king's orders, sent a herald with a troop of horse, who, taking Paslew, Eastgate, Haydock, and some others of the monks prisoners, they were arraigned at Lancaster and convicted of high treason. On the 12th March 1537, Paslew was conveyed back to Whalley for execution, where, in a field called the Holehouses, immediately facing the house of his birth, a gallows was erected, on which Paslew and Eastgate suffered punishment, or martyrdom, for the story varies according to the bias of the party by whom it is told. Haydock was carried to Padiham, and died there

the same ignominious death on the day following. The monks, driven from their asylum, escaped into France, with the exception of a few, who lingered near the scenes of their former enjoyments, hovering, like departed hopes, round the ruin to which they clung.

SIR EDWARD STANLEY.

" Why, then, the world 's mine oyster,
Which I with sword will open ! "

" God never wrought miracles to convince atheism, because his ordinary works convince it."— Bacon.

" No man doubts of a Supreme Being, until, from the consciousness of his provocations, it becomes his interest there should be none."

Government of the Tongue.

" Men are atheistical because they are first vicious, and question the *truth* of Christianity because they hate the *practice*."—South.

Drawn by G. Pickering. Engraved by Edwd Finden.

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SIR EDWARD STANLEY.

THE following will, perhaps, be thought misplaced as a polemical subject. But in relating what may be conceived as the true motive that incited Sir Edward Stanley to the founding of that beautiful structure Hornby Chapel, we may be allowed to show the operation as well as the effect;—to trace the steps by which his conversion from an awful and demoralizing infidelity was accomplished.

We have borrowed some of the arguments from "Leslie's Short Method with the Deists," condensing and illustrating them as the subject seemed to require. We hope to be pardoned this freedom; the nature of the question would necessarily refer to a range of argument and reply in frequent use; and all that we could expect to accomplish was to place the main arguments in such a position as to receive the light of some well-known and self-evident truth.

The dark transactions to which the "Parson of Slaidburn" obscurely refers, may be found in Whitaker's Whalley, pp. 475, 476.

The same historian remarks in another work,—"From several hints obliquely thrown out by friends as well as enemies, this man appears to have been a very wicked

person, of a cast and character very uncommon in those unreflecting times." "There certainly was something very extraordinary about the man, which, amidst the feodal and knightly habits in which young persons of his high rank were then bred, prompted him to speculate, however unhappily, on any metaphysical subject. Now, whether this abominable persuasion were the cause or the effect of his actual guilt,—whether he had reasoned himself into materialism in order to drown the voice of conscience, or fell into the sin of murder, because he had previously reasoned himself out of all ideas of responsibility, does not appear; but his practice, as might have been expected, was suited to his principles, and Hornby was too rich a bait to a man who hoped for no enjoyment but in the present life, and feared no retribution in another. Accordingly, we find him loudly accused of having poisoned his brother-in-law, John Harrington, by the agency of a servant; and he is suspected, also, of having, through subornation of perjury, proved or attempted to prove himself tenant of the Honor of Hornby."

SIR EDWARD STANLEY.

Sir Edward Stanley, the fifth son of Thomas first Earl of Derby, early received the notice and favour of his sovereign King Henry the Eighth. It is said of him, "The camp was his school, and his learning the pike and sword." The king's greeting, when they met, was, "*Ho! my soldier.*" Honour floated in his veins, and valour danced in his spirits. At the battle of Flodden, he commanded the rear of the English army, and was attacked by the Earls of Lenox and Argyle, both of whom were slain, together with the king of Scots, on that memorable day. Through his great bravery and skill he mainly contributed to its success. A sudden feint inducing the Scots to descend a hill, their strong-hold, an opening was caused in their ranks, which Sir Edward Stanley espying, he attacked them on the sudden with his Lancashire bowmen. So unexpected an assault put them into great disorder, which gave the first hopes of success, and kindled fresh courage through the English ranks, ending in the complete overthrow and discomfiture of their enemies.

Upon this signal achievement, Sir Edward Stanley, being much advanced thereby in the king's favour, received

from the hand of his royal master a letter of thanks, together with an assurance of some future reward. Accordingly, we are told, the year ensuing, the king keeping Whitsuntide at Eltham, in Kent, Sir Edward, being in his train, he commanded that, for his valiant acts against the Scots, when he won the hill, and relieved the English from their distress, an achievement worthy of his ancestors, who bore an eagle on their crest, he should be created Lord Monteagle;—whereupon he had a special summons to parliament in the same year, by the title of Baron Stanley, Lord Monteagle.

"Twice did he and Sir John Wallop penetrate, with only eight hundred men, into the very heart of France, and four times did he and Sir Thomas Lovell save Calais,—the first time by intelligence, the second by stratagem, the third by their valour and undaunted courage, and the fourth by their unwearied patience and assiduity." "In the dangerous insurrection by Aske and Captain Cobler, his zeal for the prince's service and the welfare of his country, caused him to outstrip his sovereign's commands by putting himself at the head of his troops without the king's commission, for which dangerous piece of loyalty he asked pardon, and received thanks." By stirring up jealousy and sedition, too, amongst the rebels, he gave his majesty time, by pretended treaties, to draw off the most eminent of the faction, and to overcome and dissipate the rest. Yet, with all this outward show of prosperity, and the bruit of noble deeds so various and multiplied, that Fame herself seemed weary of rehearsing them, there were not wanting evil reports and dark insinuations against his honour. Foul surmises prevailed, especially in the latter part of his life, as to the means by

which he possessed himself of the estates he then held in right of his lady, and those too that he enjoyed through the attainder of her uncle, Sir James Harrington. He acknowledged himself a free-thinker and a materialist, a character of rare occurrence in those ages, showing him to be as daring in his opinions as in his pursuits. That the soul of man was like the winding up of a watch, and that when the spring was run down the man died, and the soul was extinct, are still recorded as his expressions. In those days of demoralizing ignorance, this open and unhesitating opinion might be the means of creating him many dangerous and deadly enemies, especially amongst the priesthood, whose office, though tending to higher and nobler ends than the mere thralling of man's spirit to creeds and systems of secular ambition, was yet but too often devoted to this purpose. Every power that human cruelty and ingenuity could compass was tried, but happily in vain, to confine the free and unfettered spirit for ever in the dark cells of ignorance and superstition.

From a number of unconnected accounts respectingt his great, if not good man, whose virtues even would have been the vices of our own age, we find as the most prominent parts of his disposition, a thorough contempt for the maxims and opinions of the world, and an utter recklessness of its censure or esteem. Marrying into the family of the Harringtons, he resided the latter part of his life at the castle of Hornby, where we find him engaged in schemes, for the most part, tending to his own wealth and aggrandizement.

The chapel which he built is said to have been vowed at Flodden, but this statement is evidently untrue, having no foundation but the averments of those who content not

themselves with a plain narrative of facts, but assume a license to invent motives agreeable to their own folly or caprice. That Sir Edward Stanley made any such vow we cannot imagine, much less would he put it into execution. "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die," was the governing principle of his life, and the main spring of his actions. It would be a strange anomaly in the records of human opinions, to find an edifice reared to perpetuate a belief which the founder thought a delusion, a mere system of priestcraft and superstition. To this prominent feature in his history our attention has been directed, and we think the following tradition assigns a better and more plausible motive for the founding of that beautiful structure, the chapel at Hornby:—

It was by the still light of a cloudless harvest-moon, that two men appeared to be sauntering up the stream that winds through the vale near Hornby. One of them wore a clerical habit, and the other, from his dress, seemed to attend in the capacity of a menial. They rested at the foot of a steep cliff overhung with firs and copsewood. The castle, upon the summit, with its tall and narrow tower, like a feather stuck in its crown, was not visible from where they sat. The moon threw an unclouded lustre from her broad full face, far away over the wide and heavy woods by which they were surrounded. A shallow bend of the stream, towards the left, glittered over its bed like molten silver, issuing from a dark and deep pool, shaded by the jutting boughs and grim-visaged rocks from whence they hung.

The travellers now ascended by a narrow and precipitous path. Their task was continued with no little difficulty, by reason of the looseness of the soil, and the

huge rocks that obstructed their progress. By dint of scrambling, rather than walking, they, however, approached to the summit, when a light became visible over the hill, growing brighter as they ascended. It was the castle turret, where Lord Monteagle generally spent the greater part of the night in study. Whatever might be the precise nature of his pursuits, they were not supposed to be of the most reputable sort.

"Wizard spells and rites unholy"

were said to occupy these midnight vigils. Often, as that lonely watch-tower caught the eye of the benighted peasant, did he cross himself, and fancy that shadows were flitting to and fro on the trembling and distant beam.

"There it is," said the hindmost person, who was none other than the parson of Slaidburn. "That lantern, I think, is unquenchable. Does thy master never quit yon burning pinnacle?"

"May be," replied the servant, "he careth not to be oft abroad; and who dare thwart his will? 'Troth, he had need be of a tough temper that should give him speech unquestioned."

"They who hold a higher communion reck but little of this frail and pitiful dust," returned the clergyman, after a solemn pause. "It is enough that he hath sent for me. I would fain warn him ere he depart, else yon walls had not again echoed my footstep."

This confidential domestic spoke not; he was either too much attached to his master, or implicated with him, to hazard a remark.

The path was now wider and less difficult of access, leading over a pretty knoll, glittering like lode-stars in

the dew, beyond which arose the huge and cumbrous pile then distinguished as the castle of Hornby.

The barking of some half dozen hoarse-mouthed dogs announced their approach. Passing over the drawbridge, they entered the court-yard, from whence a side postern, at that time, opened a communication to the turret-chamber, without passing through the main building. A winding staircase led them directly to the summit. Soft gleams of moonlight came at intervals through the narrow loopholes, being the only help or direction whereby to accomplish their ascent. After a tedious gyration, which more than once made the hindmost party pause to obtain a respite, the guide opened a low door. It swung heavily aside, disclosing a small ante-room, destitute of all furniture, save a large oaken chest, that seemed to be the depository, or "ark," as it was usually called, for the safe keeping of the family archives.

The conductor approaching an opposite door gave a private signal. It flew open as if by its own impulse, displaying a chamber of no mean dimensions, in which, by the light from a gigantic lamp, was seen a figure seated before a table absolutely groaning with piles of books and various apparatus of unknown and wondrous import. Instruments of unimaginable shape lay in heaps round the apartment; their use it were impossible to conjecture. Furnaces, alembics, jars, glass urinals, and bottles of all sizes, rendered the chamber perilous of access, save to those who were acquainted with the intricacies of this labyrinth. "Sir Edward," as he was yet generally styled, looked full at his visitors as they entered. His eye was large and dark, the expression fierce and commanding. He was clad in a gown of black silk, covering an inner

vest of sables. From a broad belt, glittering with costly stones, hung a short sword and a pair of pistols richly embossed.

The upper portion of his head was bald; the hair on its sides short and frizzly. His beard was of a reddish tinge, trimmed square and bushy, beneath which his white ruff seemed to glisten from the sudden contrast. His forehead was high and retreating; his face pale, and his cheek hollow and slightly wrinkled. His nose was small, looking ill suited to the other features, which were large and strongly marked. His mouth was full, but compressed; and his teeth beautifully white and well shapen. When he spoke, they were much exposed, projecting slightly, and tending to give an air of ferocity to his countenance.

In stature he was tall and well formed. Proudly upright in his gait and attitude, he appeared like one born to be obeyed, — to rule in whatever station he occupied.

"Sir Hugh Parker. The parson of Slaidburn is welcome to Hornby," said Lord Monteagle, rising; "It is long since we have met. I claim the privilege of old fellowship: give me thy hand."

"My lord, I am here at your request. Your wishes are commands with my poor endeavours."

"Thou mayest retire, Maudsley," said the baron to his servant, motioning him to depart. The minister was accommodated with a low stool, made vacant for the occasion. Lord Monteagle closing the book, abruptly addressed his visitor, —

"I knew thou wast in the neighbourhood, and I would unravel a few arguments with thee; a few quiddities about thy profession. I know thou art skilful at thy

trade, which, though a vocation having its basis in fraud, finding countenance through the weakness and credulity of mankind, doth yet hold the commonalty in thrall and terror, a restraint which none other scheme might peradventure impose."

"You are too harsh, my lord. I minister not to aught that my conscience disapproves. Being of the Reformed Church, I do not mightily affect creeds and opinions. The Bible is the fountain, pure and undefiled; its waters fertilise and invigorate the seed of the faith, but choke and rot the rampant weeds of error and superstition."

"The Bible! a forgery: the invention of a cunning priesthood to mask and perpetuate their delusions. Prove its falsehoods to be the truth. Distinguish me thy revelation from the impostures of Mahomet, the dreams of the Sibyls, and the lying oracles of Heathenrie. Oblige me either to renounce my reason and the common principles which distinguish truth from error, or to admit the proof thou shalt allege, which proof, look thee, must be such as no imposture can lay claim to, otherwise it proves thy doctrine to be an imposture. If thy religion be true, there *must* be such a proof. For if the Being, who gave this revelation which he requires all men to receive, have left his own truth destitute of the only proof which can distinguish it from an imposture, this will be an impeaching of his wisdom; an error in the very ouset of the case, proving him not the Allwise, but liable to infirmity and error. This, thou seest, will bring our debate within a narrow compass."

"Nevertheless, I must own the task is hard," replied the clergyman, "because of the blindness and impotency

of that same reason of which thou vauntest, and the feebleness of our mental sight; for we cannot come at any abstract truth whatsoever but by many inferences hanging together as by a chain, one link of which, not fully apprehended or made fast, loosens the whole, and the argument falls to the ground."

"Does the reformed doctrine, too, require a belief in what the hearer may not comprehend?" said the Baron, scornfully.

"Nay, there is a sufficiency in the evidence, and a fullness in this testimony, of which none other history can boast.—What book is that, my lord?"

"The Anabasis."

"By whom?"

"Surely thou art in jest. 'T is Xenophon's."

"How? Xenophon!" said the divine, "Methinks thou speakest unadvisedly. My reason or apprehension knoweth not of such a man, or that he writ this book, and yet thou boldly affirmest the history to be true!"

"I know not that it was ever doubted," replied the other. "The common consent and belief of mankind, the transmission of the record from remote ages, are of themselves no mean evidence of its truth. But there must have been a time when it was first written, and as he appeals in it to facts, to matters which were then of recent occurrence, and to the public knowledge and belief of those facts, surely every of these statements would have ensured detection, especially if put forth at or about the time when the events took place. Would it not have been madness to appeal to eye-witnesses of transactions which never happened, which witnesses were then alive, and could easily have belied such an impudent and furtive

attempt at imposture. The idea seems almost too absurd to refute.

"Thou judgest well. It would be madness and absurdity in the extreme to deny the existence of thy historian, or the events to which he refers; and yet a record which to thee is of the greatest moment, wherein thine own interests are for ever involved, and to the truth of which there is much more clear and irrefragable testimony, thou rejectest as a fraud and an imposture."

"What proof can its promulgers give me of the infallibility of their doctrines, even supposing these events to be true?"

"Miracles, acknowledged to be such, contravening and transcending the common course of nature,—these, I reckon, will be a sufficient warranty that the message is from the great Author of all things himself."

"I own these are the strongest evidences that I could require, and I would admit them if I had witnessed their performance."

"Good. Now to the proof. It is impossible that any simple fact could be imposed, or that a number of persons could be made to believe they had witnessed such fact, unless it had actually taken place. For instance, if I were to assert that I had divided the waters of this river here, in the presence of the inhabitants, and that I had once led the whole of them over dryshod, the waters standing like a wall on each side, to guard their path, appealing to them at the same time in proof of my testimony; it would be impossible, I say, to convince those people it were true, provided the event had not happened. Every person would be at hand to contradict me, and, consequently, it would be impossible that such an imposition

could be put upon them against the direct evidence of their senses."

"Granted," replied the Baron. "But this tale I am not too bold to infer might be invented when that generation had passed, when the credulity of coming ages might lead men to believe in such foolish and monstrous imaginings, like the labours of Hercules, the amours of Jove, and the cannibal exploits of Saturn."

"Nay, but hear me. Whenever such a story was first promulged, were it then stated that not only public monuments remained to attest the event, but that public rites and ceremonies were kept up for its express commemoration, which rites were to that day continual, and to which those writings appealed as evidence attesting the performance of such miracles, then must the deceit have been rendered but the more glaring and easy of detection, as no such monuments could exist, no rites, no ceremonies demonstrating the truth of this appeal could be in observance. Thus, if I should now invent the tale about something done two thousand odd years ago, a few might, peradventure, be credulous enough to believe me; but if I were to say that ever after, even to this day, every male had his nose slit and his ears bored in memory of this event, it would be absolutely impossible that I should gain credit for my story, because the universality of the falsehood being manifest, and the attestation thereof visibly untrue, would prove the whole history to be false. Such were the rites and customs of the Jews."

"But still, rites and observances were practised by the Heathen, which ceremonies ye acknowledge to have been false and impious; yet their followers worshipped and slid their neck into the yoke as readily as thy favourite

Hebrews, who are proverbially rogues and cheats, in the estimation even of infidels themselves."

"Ay, but impostors appeal not to facts, to eye-witnesses of some event, confirming and attesting the authority of their mission. Moses could not have persuaded half a million of persons that he had brought them through the Red Sea, fed them forty years with manna in the wilderness, and performed many other miracles during their journey, had not the facts been well known; and down to this day the rites and ceremonies of the Jews are, in consequence, linked to these main facts, as securely as though we ourselves had formed the first series of the chain, eye-witnesses to the miracles they attest. Again, the books of Moses expressly represent that they are the great history and transcript of the Jewish law, and speak of their being delivered by him and kept in the ark from his time; likewise they are commanded to be read at stated periods, and to be taught from father to son throughout all generations, to the end that no imposition might be practised. In whatever age, therefore, after Moses, these forgeries were committed, it were impossible they should have been believed;—every one must have known they had not even heard of them aforetime, much less been taught all these burdensome precepts by their forefathers."

"Still the cunning and wily priests might have prepared men's minds for the discovery, having themselves deposited these writings in the ark."

"A manifest impossibility, my lord, and for this plain reason; those writings profess to be a book of statutes, the standing law of the land; a code of ordinances by which the people had all along been governed. Could any person

invent a body of statutes for this good realm of England, and make it pass upon the nation as the only book of laws which they had ever known or observed? Could any man, could any priest, or conspiracy of priests, have persuaded the Jews they had owned and obeyed these ordinances from the time of Moses, when they had not even so much as heard of them in times past?"

"These rites, it is most likely, having their origin in the simplest occurrences, might still have been practised prior to the forgeries; and these books, by allusions to them, deceived the nation, causing it to believe they were performed in memory of some miraculous events which never happened."

"What! Is it possible to persuade men they have kept laws which they have not even heard of? If I were to frame some idle story of things done a long while ago, and say that our Sabbath was kept holy in commemoration of these events;—this, I think, my lord, will answer to the terms of your assertion;—suppose I made an attempt to persuade the people this day was kept holy in memory of Julius Cæsar or Mahomet, and that every body had been circumcised or baptized in their names; that, in the courts of judicature, oaths had been taken on these very writings I had fabricated, and which, of necessity, they could not have seen prior to my attempt; and that these books likewise contained their laws and religion—ordinances which they had always acknowledged,—is it possible, I ask, that such a cheat could have for one moment existed? An impostor would not have dared to make any such references, knowing they must inevitably have led to the rejection of his testimony."

"But surely, if this great transaction, the passage of

the Red Sea, had really happened, and in the way thou hast pointed out, the evidence would not have been suffered to rest solely on the frail and uncertain records to which thou hast referred. Books of laws,— for instance, the writings of Mahomet,—we know have been forged, as even thou wilt acknowledge."

"True; but those books refer not to miracles and the testimony of eye-witnesses, nor to laws and ordinances handed down from generation to generation, even to that time. That Mahomet pretended not to the working of miracles, he tells us in the Koran. The ridiculous legends related by his followers, are rejected as spurious by the scholars and expounders of the prophet; and even his converse with the moon, his night journey from Mecca to Jerusalem, and from thence to heaven, were not performed before witnesses. The same may be said of the absurd exploits related of the heathen deities."

"But had not the heathen their priests, their public rites and sacrifices, equally with the Jews?"

"They had. But it was not even pretended that these rites commenced at the time when the things which they commemorate were said to have happened. The Bacchanalia, for example, and other festivals, were established long after the fabulous events to which they refer. The priests of Juno and Venus were not appointed by those imaginary deities, but arose in some after age, and are, therefore, no evidence whatever to the truth of their worship."

"But where is thy proof in the unwritten evidence,— monuments which cannot lie, bearing silent but convincing testimony to the truth of these miracles?"

"Twelve stones, it is said, were set up at Gilgal to commemorate the passage over Jordan."

"Ay, in thy book we read it."

"But mark the intention, to which no lying imposture durst have referred,—to the end, it is written, that when the children of those who had witnessed this miracle, and their children's children, should ask their meaning, it should be told them. Now the miracle for which these stones were set up, as a memorial by the eye-witnesses themselves, could not, as before proved, have been imposed upon the people at the time it happened, had it not really occurred."

"All this I can safely grant. Yet thou lackest wherewith to conclude thine argument."

"Bear with me, my lord, until I have made an end. Let us suppose, for one moment, there was no such miracle wrought as this same passage over Jordan."

"Which supposition of thine do I hold to be the truth, as firmly as I believe your revelation is an imposture."

"And yet if it *should* be true, my lord?" The minister said this in a tone that made the listener start. He bit his lips. But the feeling had subsided, as, with a sharp and hurried accent, he exclaimed,—

"Why this pause? I am prepared to listen."

"These stones," continued the divine, "were, of necessity, well known as public monuments existing at the time when these writings were first rehearsed in the ears of all the people, because they are here referred to, as testimonials of the event. But supposing them to have been set up on some unknown occasion as you say, and that designing men in after ages invented the book of Joshua, affirming it was written at the time of that imaginary

event by Joshua himself, addùcing this pile of stones in evidence of its truth, what is the answer which every one who heard it must have made to this witless falsehood? 'We know this pile of stones,' they would say; 'but of such an origin as thou hast related we have not heard, nor even of this book of Joshua. Where has it been concealed, and from whence was it brought forth? Besides, it solemnly inculcates that this miraculous event, our fathers' passage over Jordan, should be taught their children and children's children from that day forward, who were to be shewn and carefully instructed as to the meaning and design of this very monument; but of this we have not so much as heard, nor has thy history been handed down to us from our forefathers. It is a lying testimony, therefore, and we cannot receive it.' Yet do we find the children of Israel commemorating, handing down, and instructing their children from age to age into the meaning and design of these memorials, which instruction must at some time or another have had a beginning, having its commencement with the very events to which they refer, which events it would then have been impossible to make the people believe against the plain evidence of their senses. Is the chain complete, my lord?"

"But what has all this to do with thy religion?—A system far different, methinks, from the primitive institutions of these remote ages."

"The self-same reasoning will apply, and in precisely the same mode, to the miracles of our Lord and his apostles, together with their transmission by records from their times. The histories of the Old and New Testaments could not have been received at the time they were written, if they had not been true, because the priesthoods

of Levi and of Christ,—the observance of the Sabbath, the passover and circumcision,—the ordinances of baptism and the eucharist, are there represented as descending by uninterrupted succession from the time of their respective institution. It would have been as impossible to persuade men in after ages that they had been circumcised or baptised, had celebrated passovers and sabbaths under the ministration of a certain order of priests, if it were not so, as to make them believe they had gone through the seas dry-shod, seen the dead raised, and so forth. But without such a persuasion neither the Law nor Gospel could have been received."

"Yet, methinks, if I were the founder of a new religion, and had all the stores of Nature and Omnipotence at my command,—those boasted attributes of thy lawgiver—I would not have left it liable to doubt, to the sneers and cavils of any one who might question my pretensions, or my right to control their belief. The truths of Omnipotence should be clear as the sun's beam, and unquestioned as his existence."

"'If they believe not Moses and the Prophets, neither would they believe, though one should rise from the dead.' 'T is not for lack of proof; 't is for lack of will. 'T is not for lack of testimony, one tithe of which would have gained a ready assent to any of the drivelling absurdities of Heathen Mythology,—'t is for lack of inclination; 't is a wish that these revelations may not be true; and where the heart inclines, the judgment is easily biassed."

"True, 'as the fool thinks.' The proverb is somewhat stale. I marvel thou findest not its application to thine own bias, perdie!"

"At any rate, if I am fooled, I am none the worse for

my belief, if my creed be not true; but if a man, as thou wouldest fain hope, is like the beasts that perish, I am still at quits with thee. And if this dream of thine should prove but a dream,—and thou shouldest awake—to the horrors of the pit, and the torments of the worm that dieth not!"

"Peace, thou croaker! I did not send for thee to prophesy, but to prove; I would break a lance and hold a tilt at thine argument. Now, I have a weapon in reserve which shall break down thy defences,—the web of thy reasoning shall vanish. The fear of punishment, and the hope of future reward, held out as a bait to the cowardly and the selfish, shall be of no avail when the object of my research is accomplished. Hast thou not heard of the supreme elixir,—the pabulum of life, which, if a man find, he may renew his years, and bid defiance alike to time and the destroyer? Then what will become of thy boasted system of opinions, begotten by priesthood, and nurtured by folly?"

"And this phantasma, which man has never seen; which exists not upon the least shadow of evidence,—which has not even the lowest dictates of sense and plausibility in its favour,—on this ignis fatuus, eluding the grasp, and for ever mocking the folly of its pursuers, thou canst build thine hopes, because it flatters thy wishes and thy fears?"

"My fears!" said the baron, rising: "And who speaks of my *fears?* I would chastise thee, thou insolent priest, wert thou not protected by the laws of courtesy."

"Yes, *thy* fears, Baron Monteagle," said this undaunted minister of the truth. "Thou wouldest not care to face thy lady's cousin!—His blood yet crieth from the ground!"

"And who dares whisper, even to the walls, that I murdered John Harrington?" cried the astonished adept, trembling with ill-suppressed rage. "Methinks he holdeth his life too cheap who doth let this foul suspicion even rest upon his thoughts." He drew his sword as he spoke; but the minister stood undaunted, surveying his adversary with a look of pity and commiseration.

"Put up thy sword. Thou hast enow of sins to repent thee of without an old man's blood added to the number."

"How hast thou dared this insult? By my ——"

"Nay, spare your oaths, my lord; they are better unspoken than unkept."

"Have I sent for thee to make sport? To gibe and taunt me even to my face?"

"I'll tell thee for what cause thou didst crave my presence," replied the other, firmly. "Thou hast misgivings lest thine own hopes should not be true; lest thou shouldest perchance depart with a lie in thy right hand. Thou didst send for me, an unworthy minister to the faith which I profess, that by thy subtlety thou mightest deceive thyself; that by overthrowing my arguments thine own might be strengthened; for truly 't is a comfortable thing to have our opinions confirmed through the weakness of an opponent."

"And daredst thou, with such apprehensions upon thy stomach, to commit thyself alone to my mercy and my keeping? Suppose I should reward thee according to thine own base suspicions. Understandest thou me?"

"Yes, proud and guilty man, too well! But I fear thee not!"

"What! holdest thou a charmed life? Thou mayest

fall into a broil as well as other men. And who shall require thy blood at my hands?"

"Ere I left," said the divine, warily, "I whispered a word in your cousin Beaumont's ear. Should I not return, he will be here anon. Peradventure I am not misunderstood. Thou hadst need be careful of my life, otherwise thine own may be in jeopardy!"

A fierce and terrible brightness, like the lurid flashes from his own torment, burst from his eye. The very anger and malice he strove to quell made it burn still hotter. His visage gathered blackness, cloud hurrying on cloud, like the grim billows of the storm across a glowing atmosphere. Rapid was the transition. Rage, apprehension, abhorrence,—all that hate and malignity could express, threw their appalling shadows over his features. Still the dark hints uttered by his visitor seemed to hold him in check. Chafed, maddened, yet not daring to execute the vengeance he desired, he strode through the apartment with an uneasy and perturbed gait. He paused at times, darting a look at the minister as if about to address him. Suddenly he stood still, nerving his spirit to some awful question.

"My cousin John Harrington died in his own chamber. In this house, God wot. Thou didst shrive him at his last shift, and how sayest thou he was poisoned?"

"I said not aught so plainly; but thou hast spoken out. Behold him!—There!"—The divine pointed his finger slowly round the apartment. "Within a short space he cites thee to that bar where his presence will be a swift witness to thy doom!"

Had the spirit of the unfortunate heir of Hornby suddenly appeared, the baron could not have followed the

movement of the minister's hand with greater dismay and astonishment. The strong barrier of guilt seemed breaking down. Conscience aroused,—as if at once the veil that concealed his iniquities had been withdrawn, they rose in all their unmitigated horror and enormity. An arrow, drawn at a venture, had pierced the joints of the harness. He stood powerless and without defence;—motionless as the image of despair. By a strange coincidence, a thick white cloud seemed to coil itself heavily round the room. Whether to the heated imaginations of the disputants this appearance might not present an image of the form then visible to their minds, it would be impossible to determine. Suffice it to say, the effect was memorable, from whatever cause it was produced.

An altered man was the Baron Monteagle. The arguments of this champion of the truth had in some measure prepared his mind for its reception. Under his ministrations he felt gradually more enlightened. His terrors were calmed. Soon afterwards rose that noble structure, the chapel of Hornby, bearing on its front the following legend :—

EDWARDUS STANLEY MILES, DNS. MONTEAGLE,
ME FIERI FECIT.

It is recorded that Sir Edward Stanley, Baron Monteagle, died in the faith he had once despised; and we trust he has found a place at the footstool of that Mercy, whose interposition was not solicited in vain.

GEORGE MARSH, THE MARTYR.

"Heavy persecution shall arise
Of all, who in the worship persevere
Of spirit and truth."

MILTON.

GEORGE MARSH, THE MARTYR.

SMITHILLS or SMETHELLS HALL is situated in a wood, above a small glen, two miles and a half from Bolton. The court-gate exhibits nothing remarkable in its construction. On the left hand was the principal entrance, and a flight of stairs leading from the court. The glass casements, and greater part of the ancient front, have been removed, giving place to a more comfortable if not a more pleasing style of architecture. The wainscot once displayed a profuse assemblage of ornaments, some of which now remain. Amongst them was formerly shewn a likeness, said to be of King Egbert, though from what cause it should be assigned more particularly to that illustrious monarch, it would be difficult to conjecture.

In a room called the Green Chamber, it is said that George Marsh, the subject of the following history, was examined before Sir Roger Barton. In a passage near the door of the dining-room, is a cavity, in a flag, bearing some resemblance to the print of a man's foot, which is supposed to be the place where the holy martyr stamped, to confirm his testimony, and which is shown to this day as a memorial of his good confession.

The stone was once removed for a frolic by two or three young men who lived in the house. Taking advantage

of their parents' absence, they cast it into the glen behind the hall. That same night, on retiring to rest, the inhabitants were disturbed by many strange and hideous noises. Much alarm and enquiry being excited, the offenders confessed, and the stone was restored to its place with great reverence and solemnity. Some fragments that were broken off upon its removal were carefully replaced; after which, according to common report, the noises ceased.

Another story current in the neighbourhood is as follows:—

About the latter end of the year 1732, one Saturday night, a stranger sleeping alone in the Green Chamber was much terrified by an apparition. He stated that about ten o'clock, as he was preparing for bed, there appeared a person before him dressed like a minister, in a white robe and bands, with a book in his hand. The stranger getting into bed, saw it stand by his bedside for a short time. It then slowly retired out of the door, as if going down stairs, and he saw it no more. This person invariably persisted in the same story; and the owner of the estate immediately ordered Divine service at the chapel on a Sunday, which had long been discontinued.

The vaults seem to have been strongly walled and fortified, and were most probably used as burying-places, many bones having been found when digging. There is a tradition, that King Egbert founded this place, and kept his court here; but no corresponding trace of it occurs in history; and we may suppose, from the order of his conquests, that his residence would be in the more southern parts of the kingdom.

The situation is secluded, and well calculated for concealment, favouring the general opinion that it was the

retreat of the famous pirate, Sir Andrew Barton, whose exploits and defeat are so beautifully told in the old ballad of that name in *Percy's Reliques*. It is surprising that so little should be known of this great and bold man, whose conduct had nearly occasioned a war between England and Scotland, and whose death, it is supposed, was one of the grievances which led to the battle of Flodden.

"Up to the time of Henry the Seventh, it appears, the Radcliffes were lords of Smethells: but Joan, daughter and sole heir of Sir Ralph Radcliffe, having married Robert Barton, of Holme, he became in that reign seised of the manor and lordship, where his posterity continued, until Grace, sole daughter and heir of Thomas Barton, the last male heir, was married to Henry, eldest son of the first Lord Fauconberg, whose descendant Thomas, in the year 1721, sold the manor, which afterwards passed into the hands of the Byrons of Manchester, by whom it was sold to Mr. Peter Ainsworth of Halliwell, a descendant of the Ainsworths of Pleasington, in this county,* the present owner."

"Smethells is dependent upon the superior manor of Sharples, the lord of which claims from the owner of this place a pair of gilt spurs annually; and, by a very singular and inconvenient custom, the unlimited use of the cellars at Smethells for a week in every year." †

* Baines's Lancashire, p. 540.

† Whitaker's Whalley, p. 424.

GEORGE MARSH, THE MARTYR.

At the close of a cold keen day, about the early part of spring, in the year 1554, there came two men across a bleak and barren tract of land called Dean Moor, near to Bolton in the Moors. When at some distance from the main path, and far from the many by-roads intersecting this dreary common, they,—first looking cautiously around, as though fearing intruders,—fell on each other's neck and wept. The sun's light beamed suddenly through a cleft in the heavy clouds near the horizon, along the stunted grass and rushes, stretching far away to many a green knoll in the distance, behind which the dark hills and lowering sky looked in wild and terrific blackness

over the scene. The sun, descending fast below the hills towards Blackrode, beamed forth as if to cast one short ray of gladness on the world of sorrow he was just quitting. Rivington-Pike, and the dark chill moors stretching from it eastward, were bathed in a wide and stormy burst of light,—like the wild and unnatural brightness that sometimes irradiates even the dim shadows of despair. A heavy mist lay at their feet, hiding most of the intermediate space from the eye of the observer, so that the long line of barren hills seemed to start out at once, from a sea of vapour, like the grim barriers of some gigantic lake. The clouds were following hard upon the sun's flight, so that by the time he had disappeared, the sky was covered with a dense and impervious curtain, rendered darker by the rapidity of the change. Chill and eddying gusts rustled over the dreary heath; the voice of nature only responding to the chords of sadness and of sorrow. The hollow roar of the wind was like the moaning of a troubled ocean; a few big drops from the hurrying scud seeming to presage an approaching tempest.

The two friends had crept behind a stone wall, built up in a hollow, by a stagnant pool, taking but little heed of the darkness and the storm, so intent were they upon the subject which engrossed their thoughts.

"I might flee, Ralph, but it would straightway be said, not that I had left my country and my kin alone, but rather that I had deserted the faith and doctrine I profess, after having unworthily ministered hereabout for a season, which might be an occasion of much scandal, a weakening of the faith of my poor flock, and a grievous discouragement to those that remain."

"'A living dog is better than a dead lion,' says the

wise man. Besides, it is a presuming on His providence, when he opens a way for our escape, and we, of our own wilfulness and folly, neglect the blessing. 'Do thyself no harm.' Provide for thine own life, and run not as the horse and mule, that have no understanding, into the very throat of thine enemies, and them that seek thine hurt."

The first speaker was a man of plain but comely appearance, habited in a coarse doublet buckled about the waist with a leathern girdle. A round woollen cap, from beneath which a few straight-combed locks hung about his face, gave a quaint and precise aspect to his figure. His features, though slightly wrinkled, did not betoken either age or infirmity: but his whole appearance indicated a robust and vigorous frame, capable both of exertion and endurance. The other individual exhibited a more ungainly form and deportment. He had not the same look of benevolence and good-will to man which irradiated the features of the first, of whom it might be truly said, that his inward affections did mould and constrain his outward image into their resemblance, so that meekness and benignity shone through his countenance from the ever-glowing spirit of love and Christian charity within. There was a sharp and shrewd intelligence in the eye of the latter speaker, which showed that some considerations of selfish and worldly wisdom might, by possibility, mingle with his unerring notions of duty. Yet was he a man of great piety and worth, and well fitted as a counsellor in times of peril and distress.

"Ralph Bradshaw," replied the other, "thou hast been my tried friend and my stay in this waste and howling wilderness, and I have found thy counsel hitherto

wholesome and pleasant; but," continued Marsh with a heavy sigh, "I have not told thee how Sir Roger Barton's servants have made diligent search for me in Bolton, and have given strict charge to my brother Robert, that he should, by to-morrow at the latest, appear with me at Smethells, else shall he and my poor mother answer before him at their peril. By God's grace, I would not leave these weaklings of the flock to suffer for my sake."

"Leave this matter until thou depart; I will devise some means for their relief. I would not have thy life needlessly put in hazard, seeing how few men have been raised up like unto thyself, privileged as thou art to minister the bread of life to the hungry and famishing poor in this barren corner of God's spiritual vineyard."

"And yet," replied Marsh, "I ought with all boldness to confess the truth, fearing not to answer for the hope that is in me: and why should I refuse to obey the commands of those who are in authority? for the magistrate beareth not the sword in vain."

"Truly, obedience were his right, if so be this were some righteous judge raised up of God for the punishment of evil-doers. But, as thou well knowest, the justice thou shalt demand will not be rendered: the summons thou hast received, to answer on doctrinal and disputed points, and to argue them before these wicked and crafty men, as touching thy belief, are but manifest excuses to get thee into their power, from which they mean not to liberate thee but by the fire that shall consume thy body, and free it for ever from their murderous gripe. Thou knowest, too, that Sir Roger beareth thee a malice, and hath used all subtilty that he might have wherewith to seek occasion against thee. Didst thou not rebuke him openly for

his irreverence, when that he must needs play with his puppy, that had its collar full of bells, during God's holy service,—that comfortable form of worship established and publicly taught in the lifetime of our last good King Edward, and not this papistical, idolatrous mass which they now use, to the eternal ruin of both soul and body? No mercy shalt thou have at their hands. And doth our blessed Master require of us that we give our bodies up to these wicked and malignant deceivers, that their devilish pleasure may be glutted in torturing and spitefully using us, while they go about putting innocent men to cruel and shameful deaths? As soon would He require that we should yield our bodies up to Satan and his angels."

"I know not how to answer thee, Bradshaw, in this matter; but my mind misgives me in taking so hasty a departure from our suffering and afflicted realm. Yet will we ask counsel of Him who guideth the weak, and will not suffer us to be tempted beyond measure."

Whereat these persecuted disciples did unite in prayer to that throne before which, having finished their earthly warfare, they now stand with crowns of victory on their foreheads, purified from this gross mortality. Marsh, much comforted by the exercise, doubted not that, according to his faith, wisdom and direction would be granted in the way he should take.

Hereupon they separated, wishing each other "God-speed."

Through the darkness and tempest of that fearful night, George Marsh approached the town, where, in a narrow lane leading from the brow of the hill by the church, abode his mother and her youngest son. Raising the

latch, he saw the old woman alone, seated by the fire, weeping.

"Praised be His mercy, thou art yet safe!" said she, clasping her withered hands together. "They have again been here to seek for thee, and I was fearful thou hadst not escaped their power."

"Who has been here, and from whence?"

"Divers of Justice Barton's servants were here again, not an hour ago, who have charged thy brother Robert and thy cousin William Marsh to seek for thee, and by to-morrow, ere noon, to render thee up at Smethells. They are now gone to Atherton, and elsewhere, for aught I know."

"Then may I not tarry here to-night?"

"Nay, I beseech thee, flee for thy life. In tarrying here shalt thou not escape; for a man's enemies are now truly those of his own household."

Marsh, after a pause, determined to listen to her advice, and departed.

Cold and weary, he retraced his steps, going beyond Dean-Church, where, at a friend's house, he staid for the night, "taking ill rest," as he quaintly expresses it in his journal, "and consulting much with myself of my trouble." He expected, or at least hoped, that some intimation would be vouchsafed from his Master, as touching the way he should pursue, but none was granted; and he lay there, full of tossing and unquiet the greater part of the night. On the following morning, at his first awaking, which was early, being still in heaviness, and not knowing what to do, came another friend to his bedside, who advised him that he should in no wise depart, but abide boldly, and confess the faith. At these words he felt so

convinced, and, as it were, suddenly established in his conscience, that he doubted not, as he says, but the message was from God. He thenceforth consulted not with flesh and blood, but resolved on immediately presenting himself before his persecutors, and patiently bearing such cross as it might please Heaven to lay upon him.

He arose betimes, and, as his custom was, recited the English Litany, with other prayers, kneeling by his bedside. After which he prepared to go towards Smethells, calling, as he went, at the dwellings of several whom he knew, desiring them to pray for him, to commend him to all his friends, and to comfort his mother and his little children; for, as he then said, he felt assured that they should not see his face any more. Taking leave, with many tears and much sorrow of heart, he came nigh to the residence of Sir Roger Barton, a bigoted persecutor, and an avowed enemy of the reformed church.

It was about nine o'clock, on a cold and bitter morning, when he came in sight of the court-gate. Then surrounded with trees, the mansion itself was not visible but within a short distance. This house, now ancient and decayed, then existed in all its pomp and magnificence, having only been erected, as tradition informs us, some fifty years before, by Sir Andrew Barton, a famous pirate, or free rover, who was knighted by James III. of Scotland, for his great bravery. In the third year of Henry the Eighth, with two stout vessels called the Lion and the Jenny Perwin, he considerably interrupted the navigation on the English coasts. His pretence was, letters of reprisals granted him against the Portuguese by James III. Under colour of this grant, he took ships of all nations, alleging that they had Portuguese goods on board. Complaint

being made to the privy council of England, the Earl of Surrey said, "The narrow seas should not be infested while he had estate enough to furnish a ship, or a son capable of commanding it." Upon this, two ships were immediately fitted out, and commanded by Sir Thomas and Sir Edward Howard, sons to the Earl of Surrey, at their own expense, when, having been some days at sea, they were separated by a storm, which gave Sir Thomas Howard an opportunity of coming up with Sir Andrew Barton in the Lion, whom he immediately engaged. The fight was long and doubtful; for Barton, being an experienced seaman, and having under him a determined crew, made a desperate defence, himself cheering them with a boatswain's whistle to his last breath. The loss of their commander, however, caused them to submit, on which they received fair quarter and good usage. In the mean time, Sir Edward attacked and captured the Jenny Perwin, after an obstinate resistance. Both these ships, with as many of their crew as were left alive, about one hundred and fifty, were brought into the river Thames on the 2d of August, 1511, as trophies of the victory. The prisoners were sent to the Archbishop of York's palace, now Whitehall, where they remained for some time, but were afterwards dismissed and sent into Scotland.

James the Fourth having then ascended the Scottish throne, after the murder of his predecessor, exceedingly resented this action, and instantly sent ambassadors to Henry, demanding satisfaction, on which the king gave this memorable answer, "That the punishment of pirates was never held a breach of peace among princes." King James, however, was still dissatisfied, and from that

time was never thoroughly reconciled to the English nation.

Sir Andrew was descended of a good family in Scotland, and adopted a seafaring life when very young. A motive of concealment might be the cause of his erecting a mansion here, the roads being then almost impassable; and the extensive woods, which lay in almost every direction from this spot, together with its great distance from the sea-side, might be additional recommendations in its favour. An opinion exists, though now involved in much doubt and obscurity, that his immediate descendant was the Sir Roger Barton whom we have already named, and unto whom this pious servant of the truth was about to commit himself.

On venturing through the gate, Marsh observed several men standing by a door on the left hand, being the principal entrance.

"What, ho!" said one, "art' come to morning prayers?"

"Nay," replied another, "his cap cleaves to a heretic's sconce."

"'T is Marsh, said the foremost of the group, who proved to be Roger Wrinstone, the knight's prime minister, constable, and entrapper of heretics. "Now, by my faith," he continued, "if this wily fox do not think, by his coming, to take Justice by the nose, and outface her through his impudence. But he will be sore mistaken if he think to outwit our master by his cunning. Good friend, thy business?" said Wrinstone, cap in hand, addressing the minister scornfully, and thrusting his tongue into his cheek, to the great diversion of his companions,

who, with shouts of laughter, began to ape the buffoonery of their leader.

"I would fain speak with the Justice," said the stranger, meekly.

"And suppose I were he," said Wrinstone, putting himself into an attitude of great authority and importance, setting out his paunch, at the same time, something like unto the knight himself. Another laugh, or rather titter, went through the court-yard at this exploit; a suspicious glance, however, was directed towards the casement above, some apprehensions evidently existing lest Sir Roger should have been eye-witness to the ceremony.

"Roger Wrinstone, thy mocking is ill timed," said Marsh, with a severe and stedfast gaze, which seemed to awe even this unblushing minion of intolerance. "If thy master be not arisen, I will tarry awhile his worship's leisure."

"Sir Roger is with his priest at confession," said one, with a shout of derision. "Art' come to confess him too, Father Marsh?" and with that they plucked him by the beard, mocking and ill-treating him. But, filled with joy, that he was accounted worthy to suffer, he passed from them into the great hall, at that period a large and lofty room, which, as tradition reports, would have "dined all the monarchs of Europe, and all their trains." It has since been much curtailed of its proportions, modern improvements having appropriated it to more useful purposes. The wainscots were enriched with choice and beautiful carvings, representing bucks' heads, flowers, and portraits of the most distinguished ancestors of the family. So numerous and varied were these ornaments, that, it is commonly

reported, the artist wrought out his apprenticeship in executing this grand work, which for minuteness and the astonishing number and ingenuity of the devices, perhaps exceeded most of the like nature throughout the realm. Amongst other whimsical fancies was a ton crossed with a bar, having the cyphers A and B above and below, which worthless and absurd pun, a sort of emblematic wit much cultivated by our forefathers, indicated the name of the founder, Sir Andrew Barton.

Marsh, on his first entrance, enquired of a servitor if the justice might be spoken with. The menial was bearing off the remains of a substantial breakfast, and, having a flagon of beer at hand, invited the stranger to a hearty draught, saying, that he looked tired and in need of refreshment; but he meekly put it aside, with due courtesy, still standing as he repeated his question. The man departed to make the enquiry, when presently followed the constable and his gang, who, seeing that the hall was cleared, strode in, rudely seizing Marsh by the shoulder.

"Thou art my prisoner," said Wrinstone; "I arrest thee in the queen's name."

At this moment came running in a little girl, bounding and frolicksome as a young fawn from its covert, who, hearing the word prisoner, and seeing a man of such a prepossessing and benign aspect in custody, immediately came up to Wrinstone, and laid hold of the skirts of his doublet, saying,

"You sha' n't, Wrinstone. If he has done amiss, let him go, and I 'll give thee some plums out of my midlent pasty."

The meekness and peaceable demeanour of this unoffending servant of the church, had in a moment won

the heart of the child, and she pulled him by the hand, as if to convey him from the grasp of his persecutor.

"May Heaven bless thee, my child, and make thee a blessing!" He lifted up his eyes while he thus spake. "Thy nature hath not yet learnt the cruel disposition of these tormentors."

It is said that his prayer was heard; and a passage in the subsequent history of this little girl may, in all likelihood, find a place in another series of our Traditions.

A tear, for the first time, trembled in the poor man's eye as he looked on this tender and compassionate babe. He thought upon his own sufferings, and the hard fate of his own little ones. But he soon repressed the rising murmur, calmly awaiting the result.

The child still clung to him; nor would she depart, though threatened with Sir Roger's displeasure by his deputy. Indeed, she cared little for the issue, being fully indulged in all her caprices by the knight, her grandfather, who was mightily entertained with her humours. But threats and cajolements failing in their effect, they were glad to let this wilful creature accompany them to the presence of Sir Roger as the dispenser of justice, or rather of his own vindictive will; and to his private chamber they were shortly summoned.

Now this distinguished knight was heavy and well fed, and of a rich and rubicund countenance. From over indulgence he had become unwieldy, being propped up in a well-stuffed chair, one leg resting on a low stool, his whole frame bloated by indolence and sensuality. He was short-necked and full-chested. His eyes, grey and fiery, were almost starting from his head, by reason of some obstruction to the free current of the blood in that direction. This was

accompanied by a wheezing and plethoric cough, which oft troubled him. At his side sat a priest, who had a fair smooth face, and a shining head, sprinkled over with a few pale-coloured locks, close cut and combed back with becoming care from his temples. His eyes were small and restless, scarcely for an instant keeping to one position. He seemed to pay a silent deference to his patron, allowing Sir Roger to begin the examination as follows:—

"So, thy relatives have ferreted thee forth at last. Nothing like making their kindred, in some sort, answer for the bodies of these heretics."

"I came of my own free consent, and alone, your worship," replied Marsh; "and hope to be honestly dealt with. If I have offended the laws, I am here to answer; if not, I claim your protection."

"Peace! Will none o' ye stop that fellow's prating? Justice thou shalt have, and that speedily, as thou sayest, but not in the way thou couldst desire. Look thee!" He fumbled in his pouch as he spake. Drawing out a letter, he continued—"My Lord Derby hath commanded, that thou be sent to Lathom along with some others who do mightily trouble us, and sow evil seed and dissension among the people."

"This, please your grace, I deny; and I would know mine accusers, and what they allege against me."

"Now this is a brave answer, truly," replied the justice. "These rogues be all of one tale, pretending that they have done nothing amiss, and desiring to know, poor innocents! of what they are accused, as though they were ignorant of their own lives and conversation hitherto. Tush!—it were a needless and an unthrifty throwing out

of words to argue the matter—for they are wiser in their own eyes than seven men who can render a reason. Do thou question him, and urge him to the test," said Sir Roger, turning to his conscience-keeper.

"What art thou?" said the priest, leaning forward for the purpose of a more strict examination.

"I am a minister," said Marsh. "It is but a short time agone since I served a cure hereabouts."

"Who gave thee orders? Or hast thou indeed received any?"

"The Bishops of London and Lincoln, after that I had diligently studied and kept terms aforetime at Cambridge."

"Humph!" said Sir Roger. "These bishops be of the reformed sect; and, I have a notion, will some day or another answer for it before the queen's council."

"What knowledge hast thou of these men?"

"I never saw them but at the time I received ordination."

After a few more questions of little moment, the priest threw out the usual net, with which his fraternity were wont to entangle those of heretical opinions.*

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* "The common net at that time," says Sir Richard Baker, "for catching of Protestants, was the real presence; and this net was used to catch the Lady Elizabeth. That princess shewed great prudence in concealing her sentiments of religion, in complying with the present modes of worship, and in eluding all questions with regard to a subject so momentous. Being asked at one time what she thought of the words of Christ, '*This is my body*,'—whether she thought it the true body of Christ that was in the sacrament,—it is said, that after some pausing she thus answered:—

"What is thy belief respecting the sacrament?"

"That is a question of too general and multifarious a nature for a plain and faithful answer."

"Are the bread and wine, by virtue of the words pronounced by the priest, changed into the body and blood of Christ? And is the sacrament, whether reserved or received, the very body and blood of Christ?"

"I am not careful to answer such enquiries, seeing that I am but unskilled and unlearned in scholastic disputes. Why do ye ask me these hard and unprofitable questions, to bring my body in danger of death, and to suck my blood?"

"We are not blood-suckers, and intend none other than to make thee a better man and a good Christian," said the priest, mightily offended. Whereat Roger Wrinstone, in his great zeal and affection for the holy church, smote Marsh a lusty blow on the mouth, saying,

"Answerest thou the priest so? By your worship's leave, I will mend his ill manners."

The little girl at this rebuke fell a crying; and her grief became so loud that Sir Roger was fain to pacify her by ordering Wrinstone to stand further apart. With red and glistening eyes she looked up and smiled at the suffering

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'Christ was the Word that spake it,
He took the bread and brake it;
And what the Word did make it,
That I believe, and take it;'

which, though it may seem but a slight expression, yet hath in it more solidness than at first sight appears; at least, it served her turn at that time to escape the net, which by a direct answer she could not have done." —*Baker's Chronicle.* p. 320.

martyr, who, remembering his own dear babes, could scarce refrain from embracing her as she clung about him, to the great displeasure of Sir Roger.

"Answer this reverend and spiritual admonisher, to the true purport and bearing of his question," said Sir Roger, with a mighty affectation of sagacity.

"I do believe Christ to be present with his sacrament, inasmuch as he is alway with his people to the end of time. But as I am not skilful in matters of such nicety, I would ask of this reverend casuist, who is more able to answer in questions of such weight than I; who am, as I said before, unlearned in disputed points; and truly I am in nothing more wishful than to come at a right knowledge and understanding of the truth."

"Say on," said the priest, something flattered by this modest appeal to his opinion.

"Our Lord took the cup and blessed it, of which he then drank, and afterwards his disciples?"

"Yes. But this doth not sanction its being sent round to the laity," replied the priest, not aware of the drift and true bearing of the enquiry.

"Then he took the bread and brake, and did eat likewise with his disciples?"

"Of a truth," replied the unwary disputant. "For these questions need but a plain and simple answer."

"Then," said Marsh, "of a surety he must have ate and drank himself!—Nay," continued he, seeing the priest turn pale with rage and vexation, "I can find none other alternative. For,—unlearned and unpractised as I am,—the absurdity of your belief is manifest."

"Thou art a child of perdition—an impious and pestilent heretic! Thou eatest and drinkest damnation to

thyself; and the holy church consigns all such to the flames, and to the fire of eternal wrath hereafter!" roared the infuriate priest, whose choler waxed hotter in proportion as he felt unable to withstand the conclusion of his opponent.

"For," as it has been observed, even by some of the most enlightened Catholics themselves,* — "theological animosity, so far from being an argument of men's conviction in their opposite sects, is a certain proof that they have never reached any serious persuasion with regard to these sublime subjects. Even those who are most impatient of contradiction in other controversies, are mild and moderate in comparison of polemical divines; and whenever a man's knowledge and experience give him a perfect assurance in his own opinion, he regards with contempt rather than anger the opposition and mistakes of others. But while men zealously maintain what they neither clearly comprehend nor entirely believe, they are shaken in their imagined faith by the opposite persuasion or even doubts of other men, and vent on their antagonists that anger and impatience which is the natural result of this state of the understanding."

"Master," cried Wrinstone, "shall I fetch the bridle, that we so oft use for scolds and ill women?"

"Ay, do pr'ythee run, Roger," said the child hastily, and looking towards him, "for my grandfather's priest is like to need it soon."

At this the worthy professor of Christian charity and good-will, darting a furious look at the girl, exclaimed—

* Cardinal Pole and others.

"Sir Roger, beware lest this viper thou art hatching be suffered to sting us. Look to it! This minion of thine is not too young either to work mischief or to escape its punishment!"

Whereupon Sir Roger, mightily afraid of his spiritual guide and granter of indulgences, rebuked the offending little one, and ordered her out of the room. With some difficulty this command was executed; but the disturbance at the door became so loud, that they were fain again to admit her, upon a sullen promise that she would behave in a more reverent manner to the priest, and refrain from interruption.

"Answer me no more with thy deep and devilish subtlety," continued this champion of the Catholic faith; "for of a truth the devil doth wonderfully aid and abet ye in all disputes touching this holy sacrament; but shew me thy belief in regard to so wholesome and comfortable a doctrine."

"I have answered before, as far as my weak understanding will permit, and, by God's grace, I will not swerve from my profession. A doctrine pushed to an absurdity is its own refutation."

Then spake one that was standing by, but who had hitherto taken no part in the debate.

"Truly 't is a pity that one so proper and well-gifted, and who might doubtless gain some profitable appointment, should so foolishly cast himself away by holding these dangerous and heretical opinions. Thou wilt bring both body and soul into jeopardy thereby. If not for thyself, yet for thy children's sake, and for thy kindred, who must needs suffer from thy contumacy, return to the communion from which thou hast cast thyself out, and to the

arms of that compassionate mother who is ever ready to receive back her erring but repentant children.

"Verily," replied the martyr, "life, children, brethren, and friends, with all the other delights and comforts of this present state, are as dear and sweet unto me as unto any other man, and I would be as loth to lose them, if I might hold them with a good conscience. But, seeing I cannot do that, I trust God will strengthen me with his Holy Spirit, so that I may lose all for his sake. For I now hold myself but as a sheep appointed to be slain, and patiently to suffer whatsoever cross it may please my most merciful Father to lay upon me. But, as God is my witness!"—he seemed to speak with a prophetic denunciation,—"from these vile ashes shall a firebrand come, that shall consume and destroy utterly these bloody men and persecutors of God's inheritance!"

So astonished were the bystanders at his audacity, that they did not so much as attempt to stay his tongue, or to lay hands upon him, whilst he continued, raising his arm in a threatening attitude,

"Ye killers of the prophets, and destroyers of them whom God hath sent unto you!—Because we reproach you with your evil deeds, and——"

"Blasphemy!" cried out Sir Roger, who was the first to recover his speech; "we will have thy tongue bored for its offence."

"Away with him!" cried the priest, who seemed nothing loth to begin his torments. "Thou shalt to my Lord Derby, and he will know how to deal with such a bitter and foul-mouthed heretic."

All was uproar and confusion. The justice was even moved from his chair, and swore out lustily, that by ten

o'clock the day following, unless this blasphemer were delivered at Lathom, he would imprison the whole family of them; such a pestilent fellow being fit, as he said, to infect all the parish with the plague of heresy.

Roger Wrinstone and his crew were preparing to drag him down stairs; but the justice, hobbling on his crutch, preceded them, leaning on the arm of his priest. The party, on their entrance into the hall, found Marsh's two kinsmen awaiting the event. They soon found that no favour was intended.

"See to it, knaves," bellowed the knight, "that this fellow is delivered up to my lord at Lathom by to-morrow, or your own carcasses shall answer for his."

Then did these poor men pray and beseech their kinsman that he would in some wise conform to the religion of his superiors, or find some way of escape from a cruel and ignominious death.

But Marsh, standing stedfast before them all, cried out with a loud voice—

"Between me and them let God witness!" Looking up to heaven, he exclaimed, as if with a sudden inspiration,—"If my cause be just, let this prayer of thine unworthy servant be heard!"

He stamped violently with his foot, and the impression of it, as the general notion is, yet remains, to attest the purity of his cause, and the cruelty and injustice of his persecutors.

To this day may be seen the print of a man's foot in the stone, which by many is believed to exist as a memorial of this good confession.

In shape it is much like that of a human foot, except its being rather longer than common. In that part where

the sole may have rested is a small dent, as though a man had stamped vehemently on the soft earth, and the weight of his body had borne principally on that place. The impression is of a dark brown, or rather reddish hue, and is very perceptible when damp, or moistened by cleaning.

Marsh's subsequent history is soon told. From Lathom, where he was examined before Lord Derby and his council, and found guilty of heretical opinions, he was committed to Lancaster, and from thence to the ecclesiastical court at Chester, where, after several examinations before Dr. Cotes, then bishop of this diocese, he was adjudged to the stake, and burnt, in pursuance of his sentence, at the place of public execution near that city, on the 24th April, 1555.

DR. DEE, THE ASTROLOGER.

"Dark was the vaulted room of gramarye
To which the wizard led the gallant knight,
Save that before a mirror huge and high
A hallowed taper shed a glimmering light
On mystic implements of magic might;
On cross, and character, and talisman,
And almagest and altar, nothing bright;
For fitful was the lustre, pale and wan,
As watch-light by the bed of some departing man."

LAY OF THE LAST MINSTREL.

COLLEGIATE CHURCH, MANCHESTER.

London, Published by Longman & C°1829.

DR. DEE, THE ASTROLOGER.

THE character of DEE, our English "Faust," as he is not inaptly called, has both been misrepresented and misunderstood. An enthusiast he undoubtedly was, but not the drivelling dotard that some of his biographers imagine. A man of profound learning, distinguished for attainments far beyond the general range of his contemporaries, he, like Faustus, and the wisest of human kind, had found out how little he knew; had perceived that the great ocean of truth yet lay unexplored before him. Pursuing his enquiries to the bound and limit, as he thought, of human knowledge, and finding it altogether "vanity," he had recourse to forbidden practices, to experiments through which the occult and hidden qualities of nature and spirit should be unveiled and subdued to his own will.

Evidently prompted to unhallowed intercourse by pride and ambition, he deluded himself with the vain and wicked hope, that the God, who spurned his impious requests, would vouchsafe to him a new and peculiar revelation. He would not bow to the plain and humbling tenets already revealed, but sought another "sign,"—a miraculous testimony to himself alone. Fancying that he was

intrusted with a divine mission, he was given up to strong delusions that he should believe a lie. He aimed at universal knowledge and exhaustless riches; but he died imbecile and a beggar!

That he was deceived by Kelly there is no doubt; and that he was sincere, at least in seeking his own promotion and aggrandizement, is equally certain; but we would rescue his character from the ridicule with which it has been invested. His grasp was greater than his power, and he fell, like heroes and conquerors in all ages, unable to execute, and overwhelmed with the vastness of his own conceptions.

John Dee was born July 13, 1527, in London. His parents were in good circumstances. At an early age (fifteen years) he studied at St. John's College, Cambridge. His application was intense. For three years, by his own account he only slept four hours every night. Two hours were allowed for meals and recreation, and the rest was spent in learning and devotion. Five years afterwards he went into the Low Countries, for the purpose of conversing with Frisius, Mercator, and others. Returning to Cambridge, he was chosen a Fellow of Trinity College, then founded by Henry the Eighth. His reputation stood very high, and his astronomical pursuits, in those days generally connected with astrology, drew upon him the imputation of being a conjuror, which character clung to him through life. This opinion was much strengthened by an accident which, he says, happened soon after his removal from St. John's College, and his being chosen a Fellow of Trinity. "Hereupon," he continues, "I did set forth a Greek Comedy of Aristophanes, named in Greek Εἰρηνη, with the performance of the Scarabæus, or

beetle—his flying up to Jupiter's palace with a man, and his basket of victuals on her back; whereat was great wondering, and many vain reports spread abroad of the means how that was effected."

He left England again soon afterwards, distinguishing himself at several foreign universities, and attracting the notice of many persons of high rank; amongst which were the Duke of Mantua and Don Lewis de la Cerda (afterwards Duke of Medina Celi). In 1551 he returned to England, being well received by King Edward and his court. A pension of one hundred crowns per annum was granted him, which he afterwards exchanged for the rectory of Upton-upon-Severn.

In Queen Mary's reign he was accused of some correspondence with the Lady Elizabeth's servants, and of practising against the queen's life by enchantments. He was seized and confined, but acquitted of the charge. He was then turned over to Bonner, to see if heresy might not be found in him. After a tedious prosecution, he was set at liberty, August 19, 1555, by an order of the council.

Upon Queen Elizabeth's accession, he was consulted as to a fit day for the coronation, and received many splendid promises of preferment, which were never realised.

In the spring of the year 1564, he made another journey abroad, when he presented to the Emperor Maximilian his book, entitled "Monas Hieroglyphica," printed at Antwerp the same year. He returned to England in the summer, producing several learned works, which shewed his extraordinary skill in the mathematics.

In 1571 he went to Lorraine, where, falling very ill, he was honoured with the solicitude of the queen, who sent two of her physicians, and gave him many other proofs of

her regard. Upon his return to England, he now settled himself in his own house at Mortlake, in Surrey, where he collected a noble library, and prosecuted his studies with great diligence. His collection is said to have consisted of more than four thousand books, nearly a fourth part of them manuscripts, which were afterwards dispersed and lost. This library, and a great number of mathematical and mechanical instruments, were destroyed by the fury of the populace in 1583, who, believing him to be a conjuror, and one that dealt with the devil, broke into his house, and tore and destroyed the fruit of his labours during the forty years preceding.

On the 16th March, 1575, Queen Elizabeth, attended by many of her court, visited Dr. Dee's house to see his library; but having buried his wife only a few hours before, he could not entertain her majesty in the way he wished. However, he brought out a glass, the properties of which he explained to his royal mistress, hoping to wipe off the aspersion, under which he had long laboured, of being a magician.

In 1578, her majesty being indisposed, Dee was sent abroad to consult with some German physicians about the nature of her complaint. But that part of his life in which he was most known to the world commenced in 1581, when his intercourse began with Edward Kelly. This man pretended to instruct him how to obtain, by means of certain invocations, an intercourse with spirits. Soon afterwards there came to England a Polish lord, Albert Laski, palatine of Siradia, a person of great learning. He was introduced to Dee by the Earl of Leicester, who was now the doctor's chief patron. Becoming acquainted, Laski prevailed upon Dee and Kelly to accompany

him to his own country. They went privately from Mortlake, embarking for Holland, from whence they travelled by land through Germany into Poland. On the 3d February, 1584, they arrived at the castle of their patron, where they remained for some time.

They afterwards visited the Emperor Rodolph at Prague. On the 17th April, 1585, Laski introduced them to Stephen, King of Poland, at Cracow; but this prince treating them very coolly, they returned to the emperor's court at Prague, from whence they were banished at the instigation of the pope's nuncio, who represented them as magicians.

The doctor and his companion afterwards found an asylum in the castle of Trebona, belonging to Count William of Rosenberg, where they lived in great splendour for a considerable time. It was said that Kelly had succeeded in procuring the powder of projection, by which they were furnished with money in profusion; but on referring to the doctor's diary, we find the miserable tricks and shifts they resorted to for the purpose of keeping up appearances. Kelly, however, it seems, learned many secrets from the German chymists, which he did not communicate to his patron; and the heart-burnings and jealousies that arose between them at length ended in an absolute rupture.

The fame of their adventures was noised through Europe, and Elizabeth, in consequence, invited Dee home. He was now separated from Kelly, and on the 1st of May, 1689, he set out on his return to England. He travelled with great pomp, was attended by a guard of horse, and, besides waggons for his goods, had no less than three coaches for the use of his family. He landed

at Gravesend on the 23d of November, and on the 9th of December was graciously received at Richmond by the Queen. He found his house at Mortlake had been pillaged, but he collected the scattered remains of his library, and was so successful, by the assistance of his friends, as to recover about three-fourths of his books, estimating his loss at about 400*l*. He had many friends, and received great presents, but was always craving and in want. The Queen sent him money from time to time, promising him two hundred angels at Christmas. One half he received, but he gave a broad hint that the Queen and himself were defrauded of the rest. He now resolved to apply for some settled subsistence, and sent a memorial by the Countess of Warwick to her majesty, earnestly requesting that commissioners might be appointed to hear his pretensions and decide upon his claims. Two commissioners were, accordingly, sent to Mortlake, where Dee showed them a book containing a distinct account of all the memorable transactions of his life, except those which occurred in his last journey abroad. He detailed to them the injuries, damages, and indignities which he had suffered, and humbly supplicated reparation at their hands. The Queen, in consequence, sent 100 marks to Mrs. Dee, and promises to her husband. At length, on December 8th, 1594, he obtained a grant of the chancellorship of St. Paul's. But this did not answer his expectations, upon which he applied to Whitgift, Archbishop of Canterbury, giving an account of all the books he had either written or published. This, with other applications, led to his being presented with the wardenship of Manchester College, vacant by the removal of Dr. William Chaderton to the see of Chester.

On the 14th of February, 1596, he arrived with his family in that town, and on the 20th he was installed in his new charge. He continued here about seven years, passing his time in a very turbulent and unquiet manner. On the 5th June, 1604, he presented a petition to King James, earnestly desiring that he might be brought to trial and delivered, by a judicial sentence, from those suspicions which his astrological and other enquiries had brought upon him. But the king, knowing the nature of his studies, was very far from shewing him any mark of his favour. In November, the same year, he quitted Manchester, returning to his house at Mortlake, where he died, old, infirm, and forsaken of his friends, being very often obliged to sell some book or other to procure a dinner. The following account of Dr. Dee's expenses from Trebona to London, copied from a statement in his own handwriting,* we have thought too curious to omit.

"The charges of my last return from beyond seas, A. 1589, being favourably called home by her Majestie from Trebon Castle in Bohemia.

"My journey of remove homeward from Trebon Castle to Staden, cost me more than 3000 dollars, which we account - - - 600 lib.

"Besides the cost of 15 horses wherewith I travelled all that journey; of which the 12 which drew my 3 coaches were very good and young Hungarian horses, and the other 3 were Wallachies for the saddles; which 15 cost with one another - - - - 120 lib.

"The three new coaches made purposely for my

* Johan Glaston. vol. ii. fol. 535.

aforesaid journey, with the furniture for the 12 coach-horses, and with the saddles and bridles for the rest, cost more than 3 score pounds - 60 lib.

" The charge of wains to carry my goods from Trebon to Staden: they being two and sometimes three (for more easy and light passage in some places), cost above an hundred and ten pounds, which I account (for an hundred of it) under my former sum of 600 lib. Under which 600 lib. also I do account for the charges of the 24 soldiers well appointed, which, by virtue of the emperor's passport, I took up in my way from Diepholt, and again from Oldenburgh: the charges of the six harquebusiers and musqueteers, which the Earl of Oldenburgh lent me out of his own garrison there: I gave to one with another a dollar a man for the day, and their meat and drink full. For at the first, 18 enemies, horsemen, well appointed, from Lingen and Wilstrusen, had lain five days attending thereabout, to have sett upon me and mine: and at Oldeborch, a Scot (one of the garrison), gave me warning of an ill-minded company lying and hovering for me in the way which I was to pass, as by a letter may appear here present. Of the former danger, the Landgrave of Hesse his letters unto me may give some evidence.

" The charges of the four Swart Ruiters, very well mounted, and appointed to attend on me at Staden, from Breme, being honourably and very carefully sent unto me by the noble con-

suls and senators of Breme, and that with a friendly farewell, (delivered unto me by the speech of one of their secretaries at my lodgings), need not be specified here what it was. For their going with me in two days to Staden, their abode there, and as much homeward, being in all five days' charges, 30 dollars.

"This was a very dangerous time to ride abroad in, thereabouts, as the merchants of Staden can well remember. The excellent learned theologian, the superintendant of Breme, Mr. D. Chrystopher Berzelius, his verses, printed the night before that of my going from Breme, and, the morning of my departure, openly delivered to me partly, and partly distributed to the company of students and others attending about to see us sett forth, and to bid us farewell, may be a memorial of some of my good credit grown in that city, and of the day of my coming from it.

"I will not enlarge my lines to specifie what other charges I was at to further some of her Majestie's servants at my lying at Breme; as 70 dollars given or lent to one Conradus Justus Newbrenner; and about 40 given to gett some letters of great importance brought to our sovereign's honorable privy council in due time.

"The charge of my fraught and passage from Staden to London, for my goods, myself, my wife, children, and servants - - 10 lib

"So that the sum total of money spent and laid out, in, and for my remove from Trebone to London, doth amount to - - - 796 lib.

" Whereby the whole sum of the former damages and losses - - 1510 lib.
" And the removing charges doth amount (with the least) to - - 796 lib.

2306 lib.

" Besides the 110 dollars disbursed at Breme, for dutiful love to Queen and country."

One minor occurrence in the following tradition, viz., the loss of the horse, is related by Lilly as happening to another of the fraternity; but we claim it—upon grounds, too trivial it might be deemed by some—for the " Doctor." It is not our intention to spoil a good story by rejecting what we cannot verify. Sufficient for us that the tale exists; though we take the liberty of telling it in our own way.

DR. DEE, THE ASTROLOGER.

THERE came a thin spare man one evening to Dr. Dee's residence in the college at Manchester, where he then dwelt by permission only from the Earl of Derby, though living there in the capacity of warden to the church.

The college being dissolved in the first of Edward VI. (1547), the possessions fell into the hands of that nobleman, who, however, kept ministers at his own charge to officiate in the church. Mary refounded the establishment, restoring the greater part of the lands, but Lord Derby still kept the college-house. In 1578, Elizabeth granted a new foundation to the college, appointing her own wardens. Dr. Dee, being the third on the new establishment, was installed with great solemnity on the 20th February, 1596.

The visitor we have just noticed was muffled in a dark cloak, having a wide and ample collar, which he threw over his head, as though anxious for concealment. The Doctor, having retired into his study, was not to be disturbed; but the stranger was urgent for admission, while Lettice Gostwich, Dee's help at all work, a pert ungracious slattern, was fully resolved not to permit his access to her master.

"Then, since nothing else will do," said the pertinacious intruder, "convey me this message,—to wit, a stranger comes to him on business of great moment, regarding his own welfare and that of the matter or event whose *corollarium* he is now studying."

Lettice, wearied through his importunity, and hoping by compliance to rid herself from these solicitations, went to the Doctor's private chamber, where, having delivered her message through the thumb-hole of the latch,—for on no account would he allow of personal intrusion—to her great surprise, he bade her be gone.

"Shew the stranger up stairs," said he. "Why hast thou kept him so long tarrying?"

Lettice, with little speed, and less good will, obeyed the Doctor's behest, grumbling loud at the capricious and uncertain humours of her master.

The visitor was at length ushered into the presence of this celebrated scholar and professor of the celestial sciences, whose predictions at one period astonished Europe; his presence, like some portentous comet, threatening war and disaster, perplexing even emperors and princes, and filling them with apprehension and dismay. But Dee was somewhat fallen from this high and dangerous celebrity. He was become querulous and ill-tempered. Never satisfied with his present condition, but always aiming at some greater thing, he generally contrived to lose what he already possessed. At one time, to controul the destinies and acquire the supreme direction of affairs, either as the High Priest or the Grand Lama of Europe, was not beyond the compass of his thoughts or the scope of his ambition. Now, he was petitioning the Queen for a small increase to his worldly pittance,

and an opportunity of clearing himself before her majesty's council from the foul and slanderous accusations by which he was continually assailed. Yet he had not abandoned his former projects. Though failing in his mission aforetime to the Emperor of Germany, the King of Poland, and others, to whom he evidently went for political purposes, and with offers of his aid, through the foreknowledge and spiritual intercourse by which he thought himself favoured, yet he still cherished the hope of promotion by such visionary follies. That chimera of the imagination, the invention of the philosopher's stone, still haunted him, and he did not yet despair of one day becoming a ruler among princes, the supreme arbiter and depositary of the fate of nations.

The delusions imposed on him by Kelly, his seer and confederate, had so impressed him with this belief, that he still purposed going abroad on a divine mission, as he called it, and only awaited the auspicious time when his spiritual instructors should point out another seer in Kelly's room, from whom he had been long separated. Though now in his seventy-first year, he was not deterred from meditating another attempt to reach the goal of his ambition. Such is the folly and madness of these enthusiasts, that, let them be never so often foiled in their inordinate expectations, yet does it in no wise hinder, but, on the contrary, sets them more fully on their desire. Casaubon, in his preface to the account of Dee's intercourse with spirits, gives a strange instance of their infatuation. He says,—

"In the days of Martin Luther, there lived one Michael Stifelius, who, applying to himself some place of the Apocalypse, took upon himself to prophesy. He foretold

that in the year of the Lord 1533, before the 29th of September, the end of the world and Christ's coming to judgment would be. He did shew so much confidence, that, some write, Luther himself was somewhat startled at the first. But that day past, he came a second time to Luther, with new calculations, and had digested the whole business into twenty-two articles, the effect of which was to demonstrate that the end of the world would be in October following. But now Luther thought he had had tryal enough, and gave so little credit to him, that he (though he loved the man) silenced him for a time; which our apocalyptical prophet took very ill at his hands, and wondered much at his incredulity. "Well, that moneth and some after that over, our prophet (who had made no little stir in the country by his prophesying) was cast into prison for his obstinacy. After a while Luther visited him, thinking by that time to find him of another mind; but so far was he from acknowledging his error, that he downright railed at Luther for giving him good counsel. And some write, that to his dying day (having lived to the age of eighty years) he never recanted."

These air-built hopes and projects may, in some sort, account for the readiness with which Dee admitted the stranger after hearing his message. It seemed to be the very echo of his own thoughts, floating on their dark current, which it quickened by some unknown and mysterious impulse.

The Doctor was sitting in a high and curiously-wrought chair, cushioned with black leather, gilt and ornamented after the antique fashion. His upper garment was of black serge, the neck and breast furred with sables. A cap of the same materials concealed his bald and shining

head, giving his pale shrivelled features a peculiar look of learning and hard study. His face was long, and his beard pointed. Age and anxiety were indelibly marked upon his lank visage; but his eye was yet undimmed: small, keen, and restless, it seemed the image of his own insatiable desire, consuming soul and body in the fire and fervour of its inordinate and uncontrolled appetite.

"Thy name?" said Dee sharply, as the stranger bowed himself before the reputed magician.

"Bartholomew Hickman."

"And thy business?" enquired the Doctor with an inquisitive glance.

"Since your reverence hath dismissed Kelly, you have been but indifferently served in the capacity of seer; mine errand is to this purport:—If we agree for wages, I will serve you; and I doubt not but my faculty of seeing will equal that of Master Kelly, provided you have a glass whose quality and virtue shall be equivalent."

"My glass," replied the Doctor, "is not to be matched throughout the world. Even Cornelius Agrippa had not its like; nor was his famous mirror fit to compare with it. Hast heard aught of its history?"

"I would listen, Master Dee; for my knowledge thereof is but gathered from the vulgar report."

"Know, then," said Dee, with an air of great pride and complacency, "that my stone was brought by the ministration of angels, in answer to fervent and oft-repeated prayer. One night, as I sate with Kelly, discoursing on the rise and fall of empires, the setting up and the downfall of estates, and many other matters of grave and weighty import, he looked uneasy for a while, saying, that he felt a strange sensation, and, as it were, a heavy

weight on his right shoulder, as though something sat there. He said a spirit, invisible at that time, was in all likelihood hearkening to our discourse, and wished to communicate with us. He then spake as though to some one behind him, and listened—'Sayest thou so,' said he, 'then will I speedily apprise the Doctor.' He then told me it was the angel Uriel, who would bring us a wonderful glass or crystal, whereby a seer—properly gifted—would be enabled to see many wonderful things; but this surprising faculty I do not possess, by reason of a fiery sign not occupying the cusp of my ascendant and medium cœli. Edward Kelly was, however, permitted to supply this defect, and I might confidently rely, he said, on the truth of those revelations, which I was to note down for the benefit of mankind, and the establishing of a new dispensation upon the earth. None but good angels could enter into this glass, and they would teach me, —as he then foretold,—many things, whereby, gaining great honour and renown, kings and princes should be reproved of me, who was raised up for their sakes. At this revelation I was exceeding glad, and more so on finding the day following in my study this precious gem, which, as I once told the Emperor Rodolph, is of such value that no earthly kingdom is worthy to be compared to the virtue or dignity thereof. I well remember the time," said Dee, delighting to dwell on these recollections: "I was at Prague, the emperor having sent for me; I went up to the castle, where, in the *Ritter-stove,* or guard-chamber, I stayed a little; Octavius Spinola, that was the chamberlain, saluted me very courteously, having understood that I was he whom the emperor waited for. Returning to the privy-chamber, he came out again, leading

me by the skirt through the dining-chamber and the privy-chamber, where the emperor sat at a table with a great chest and standish of silver, and my book and letters before him. Then craved I pardon, at his majesty's hand, for my boldness in sending him my *Monas Hieroglyphica*, dedicated to his father; but I did it of the sincere and entire good-will that I bare to his father Maximilian, and also unto his majesty. He then thanked me very kindly, saying, that he knew of my great endowments, and the esteem I had gotten of the learned; of this he had been informed by the Spanish ambassador. He said my book was rather too hard for his capacity; but he heard I had something to say to him, *Quod esset pro sua utilitate.* 'And so I have,' I replied, looking back to see first that we were alone. Hereupon, I began to declare how all my lifetime had been spent in learning, and with great pains and cost I had come to the best knowledge that man might attain to in this world. I had found, too, that no man living, neither any book, was able to teach me those truths that I desired and longed for. Therefore, I concluded within myself to make intercession and prayer to the Giver of all wisdom to send unto me knowledge, whereby I might know the nature of his creatures, and also enjoy means to use them to his honour and glory. At length it pleased God to send me his light—the angel Uriel, whereby I was assured of his merciful and gracious answer. For the space of two years and a half, as I told his majesty, angels had not ceased to minister unto me through this wonderful stone, whose history I related. Furthermore, I said, that I had a message from them unto his majesty. 'The angel of the Lord hath appeared unto me,' I cried,

'and hath rebuked you for your sins: if you will hear, and believe me, you shall triumph; if you will not hear, the Lord, the God of heaven and earth, under whom you breathe and have your being, putteth his foot against your breast, and will throw you headlong from your seat.' Moreover I said, that if he would listen to me, and take me for his counsellor, his kingdom should be established, so that there would be none like unto it throughout the world. I was commanded, likewise, to shew him the nature of the holy vision, and the manner thereof, which he might witness, and hear the words, though he could not see the fashion of the creatures in the glass. He thanked me, and said, that he would thenceforward take me to his recommendation and care. Some more promises he used, though I could not well understand them, he spake so low. Perceiving, now, that he wished to make an end for this time, I made my obeisance and departed. But mark the favour of princes!—through the cabals of some, and the intrigues of his favourite and physician, one Doctor Curtz, who was fearful of my displacing him,—in the end I was not only prevented from further access to his majesty, but banished the empire! Go to, go to," said Dee, much troubled at these thoughts, "I am something too much affected of these vain impressions, and the pomp of these earthly ones."

He arose, lifting an ebony cabinet on the table, which he unlocked with great solemnity. During this operation, he fell to muttering many prayers; and, with an air of great reverence, he took out a richly-embossed casket, which being opened, there was displayed a fair crystal of an egg-shaped form, on which he gazed with a long and silent delight.

"A treasure beyond all price," said Bartholomew, eyeing it with rapture.

"Even so," said Dee, "and, by the grace of the Giver, I do hope to profit by it. Once it was removed from me. Listen. It was in the little chapel, or oratory, next the chambers which Lord William of Rosenburg had allotted us in his castle at Trebona. I had set the stone in its wonted place upon the table, or altar as we called it, when Kelly saw a great flame in the stone, which thing, though he told me, I made no end of my usual prayer. But suddenly, one seemed to come in at the south window of the chapel, right opposite to Kelly, while the stone was heaved up without hands, and set down again; wonderful to behold! After which, I saw the man who came in at the window; he had his lower parts in a cloud, and with open arms flew towards Kelly. At which sight he shrunk back, and the creature took up between both hands the stone with its frame of gold, and mounted up the way he came. Kelly caught at it, but could not touch it: thereupon he was grievously alarmed, and had the *tremor cordis* for a good while after.* This my angelical stone being taken away, I was mightily troubled, for the other stones in my possession being made through man's skill and device, I had not a safe warranty of their virtue, so that I might confidently trust in what they should disclose. I was afraid, too, of the intrusion of wicked spirits into them, who might impose on me with their delusions. This happened on a Friday, being the 24th of April, 1587; as I find it recorded in my diary. But mark the manner of its return! The following

* Vide Casaubon's Folio, concerning Dee's intercourse with spirits.

month, on the 22d day, and on the same day of the week, about four hours post meridian, as I and Kelly were walking out through the orchard, down the river side, he saw two little men fighting there furiously with swords: and one said to the other, '*Thou hast beguiled me.*' As I drew near, they did not abate their heat, but the fray seemed to wax even hotter than before. I at length said, '*Good friends, let me take up the matter between you;*' whereupon they stayed, the elder of them saying, '*I sent a present to thy wife, and this fellow hath taken it away.*' With this, they again fought, until the other was wounded in his thigh, which seemed to bleed. Being in great pain, he took out of his bosom something, that I guessed to be the very treasure that I had lost. '*Now will I make thee return it,*" said the first speaker; with that, the other, who was wounded, seemed to go suddenly out of sight, but came again ere I could answer a word. The elder of them then asked him, saying, '*Hast thou laid it under the right pillow of the bed where he lay yesternight?*' With these words, they both went towards a willow tree on the right, by the new stairs, which tree seemed to cleave open, and as they went in it closed, and I never saw them more. With great haste I returned to my chamber, where, lifting up the right pillow, I found my precious stone; being greatly rejoiced, together with my wife, who joined me in thanking God for its return." *

"An exceeding comfortable and gracious providence! being preserved, I doubt not, from the evil ones;" said Bartholomew Hickman. "But I would fain give you a sample of my skill, if so be that you will prepare the crystal, charging it with due care and attention."

* Casaubon.

Then did the Doctor betake himself to the performance of sundry strange rites, consisting of many absurd forms and hard speeches, ever and anon ejaculating a fervent prayer for success, and a petition against doubt and deception. He spread a fair carpet on the table, disposing the candlesticks on each side, and a little behind the crystal. This was placed upon a cushion of black silk, a crucifix near, and the psalter before it, open at the service for the departed. After a profound silence for about the space of half an hour, Dee looked towards his visitor as if expecting that he should begin. The seer threw off his upper garment, and kneeling down, clad only in a short tunic of grey cloth, without ruff or belt, he betook himself, though with some agitation, to the repeating of a few short Latin prayers, intermingled with cabalistical jargon, and scraps of some unknown and uncouth tongue. The Doctor gave special heed thereto, hearkening as though not overcredulous in the boasted skill of his visitor. Presently the latter put his face close to the stone, binding it before his eyes with a white napkin, his head still resting on the table. Dee asked him softly, "What seest thou?"

"Nothing;" said Bartholomew.

"Is the curtain not yet visible in the stone?"

"I cannot even see the curtain," replied the seer; "for all is dark."

Then Dee began to pray earnestly that some of his former friends might appear, whom he called by many outlandish names, such as *Ave, Nalvage, Madini,* and others. Immediately Bartholomew cried out,

"I see a glimmer!—Soft!"

The Doctor scarcely durst breathe, fearing to interrupt the opening of the vision.

"I see a golden curtain, partly drawn aside."

"The charge beginneth to work," said Dee. "'T is the very appearance that was always vouchsafed to Kelly, ere the spirits showed themselves in the glass. Note well what thou seest."

"There appeareth a white cloud, as a curdly vapour wreathing itself about a pillar of burning brass, but no creature is visible.—I hear a voice!"

"Mark the words, and repeat them steadily," said the Doctor, who drew nearer, that he might hear the purport of the revelation.

"'*Sanctum signatum et ad tempus,*' said the voice."

"The sense of this may be understood diversely. By which sense may we be guided?" said Dee, as though speaking to some invisible thing within the glass. Presently the seer again repeated,

"'*Sanctum, quia hoc velle suum; sigillatum, quia determinatum ad tempus;*' the voice ceaseth:—but these be hard speeches, Master Dee. I hear again, '*Ad tempus et ad tempus (inquam) quia rerum consummatio—All things are at hand,*

'The seat is prepared.
Justice hath determined.
The time is short.'"

"Seest thou no creature?" anxiously enquired the Doctor.

"None. But the pillar openeth as though it were cleft. Now a woman cometh forth out of the pedestal, covered with a cloud. I can see her face dimly, at times, through this veil, which seemeth to pass over as a thin cloud before the dazzling sun. She standeth as though in a hollow shell, glistening with such fair colours that no

earthly brightness may be comparable to it. She now seemeth to wrap the hir about her as a garment. She entereth into a thick cloud and disappears. There now cometh one like unto a little girl, her air turned up before, and flowing behind in long and bright curls. Her raiment sparkles like unto changeable silk, green and red."

"'Tis *Madini*," said Dee, with great delight. "Note well what she sayeth, for she is my good angel."

She sitteth down. Her lips move as though she were speaking, but I hear nothing."

"I will speak to her," said Dee; "for she will answer me through thy ministry, if it really be Madini. Art thou Madini, that has appeared to me beforetime?"

"I think she answereth, 'Yes.' But her voice is very feeble."

"I would thou shouldest resolve me three things," said the Doctor, again addressing himself towards the glass. "To wit.—Whereto shall I direct my journey, and how shall I cause it to prosper?—Secondly, I would speedily be instructed in that great and heavenly mystery, the powder of projection, which I have been oft promised, but never understood aright by reason of my feeble apprehensions, or inability to accomplish the grand and sublime arcanum.—Thirdly, How I may find the treasure which was shewn to me in a dream three several times; but where it is hidden is withheld from me."

"She says she will answer so far as the will of him that sent her may permit; but she hath a short continuance, and her answer must be brief. With respect to the country, make thine own choice, and thou shalt be directed in it for thy good. The other questions she says she cannot solve, but will send one of the seven who bear rule over

the seals of the metals and their matrix. She hath departed, yet I saw her not. She went like a sudden stroke of light; and now there cometh a man clad in sober apparel, with an inkhorn at his girdle. He holdeth a pen, as though he would write, but his face is veiled."

"'T is a motion that I should bring my tablets," said the Doctor.

"Now he is writing," continued the seer. "He showeth me a roll of parchment. But the glass becometh dim, and I think that evil spirits are troubling us, for the whole seems to waver, like the glowing air over the furnace."

The Doctor now fell to his prayers, when Bartholomew assured him the glass grew brighter, gradually becoming still, like the subsiding of waves after some accidental disturbance. He could now see the writing distinctly, and the veil was also removed.

"Give me the words, to the very letter," said Dee, earnestly, as he prepared to write.

"It runs thus:—'The most noble and divine magister; the beginning and continuation of life. Watch well, and gather him so at the highest; for in one hour he descendeth or ascendeth from the purpose.

'*Take common Audcal, purge and work it by Rlodnr, of four divers digestions, continuing the last digestion for fourteen days in one and a swift proportion, until it be Dlasod fixed, a most red and luminous body, the image of resurrection. Take also Lulo of Red Roxtan, and work him through the four fiery degrees, until thou have his Audcal, and then gather him. Then double every degree of your Rlodnr, and by the law of mixture and conjunction work them diligently together. Notwithstanding backward through*

every degree, multiply the lower and last Rlodnr, his due office finished by one degree more than the highest. So doth it become Darr, the thing you seek for; a holy, just, glorious, red, and dignified Dlasod.' "

"Methinks I have heard this before," said Dee, "and understood it not. I am truly in great perplexity for want of money; but still I understand not the purport of these symbols, the which, I beseech thee, now vouchsafe to thine unworthy servant."

"'See thou take the season,'" said the voice, "'and get her while it is yet time. If ye let the harvest pass, ye shall desire to gather and shall not be able.'"

"Take pity on mine infirmities, and make it plain," supplicated the Doctor, who now began to fear the usual evasions and disappointments.

"'Before I go,'" replied the vision, "'I will not be hidden from thee. Read thy lesson.'"

"I read, '*Take common Audcal,*' and so on."

"'What is Audcal?' enquireth the spirit."

"Alas! I know not; but thou knowest."

"'It is gold, and Dlasod is sulphur.'"

"Take also, it says, Lulo of Red Roxtan."

"'Roxtan is pure and simple wine in herself, and Lulo is her mother.'"

"There is yet, in these words, no slight ambiguity."

"'Lulo is tartar of red wine, and Audcal is his mercury. Darr, in the angelical tongue, is the true name of the stone.'"

"He said before that Audcal was gold," said Dee, addressing the seer.

"Be thankful," replied Bartholomew, "and keep what thou hast received."

The Doctor was, for the present, satisfied; but a little reflection afterwards, and another trial, left him as ignorant and as poor as ever.

He now returned thanks in the Latin tongue, it being his general custom at the end of each revelation, or motion, as it was called.

"*Deo nostro omnipotenti sit omnis Laus, Honor, Gloria, et Jubilatio.*"

Unto which the seer responded, "Amen."

"Now for the third question."

"He goeth to one side," said Bartholomew, "and the curtain hideth him. Now he returneth, leading an old man blindfolded, who answereth in manner following, as though to questions put by the first:—'It is within, and by a garden belonging to the new lodge in Aldport Park. It is in three parts or places.' He now seems to pause. Again he speaks. 'Many roots and trees do hinder the gathering of it; but if he be wise, and understand these things, he may obtain his pleasure. One part was laid by Sir James Stanley, the warden, an hundred years ago. Another portion was hidden by an aged nun. The remainder was left by the Romans, and may be found under the foundations of the castle in the park. The time is short, and the treasure guarded; but he shall overcome. Listen:—'*Nine with twice seven northerly, and* ACER *shall disappear. The mystical number added to the number enfolding itself; this shall be added to its own towards the rising sun. Then turn half round, and note well thy right foot. What thou seest gather, and it shall lead thee on to perfection.*' "

"Ask him the amount or worth of the treasure," said Dee, whose cupidity gloated over the bare thoughts of this vast hoard.

"He says, it is 'two thousand and a half, besides odd money.'"

"How? In gold or silver?"

"'More than three parts thereof are in gold.'"

"Most humbly and heartily do I thank thee, Oh ——"

Dee was opening out another form of thanksgiving, when the seer interrupted his hypocritical and blasphemous addresses.

"The old man goeth aside, groping his way as though it were dark. Now all is dim, and the curtain covereth the stone, by which we are warned to retire."

The needful and concluding ceremonies being gone through, the crystal was returned to its place. After pondering awhile, the Doctor put many questions to his guest about his residence, worldly calling, and so forth. He offered him 50*l.* yearly, besides lodging, and a fair proportion of gold when the celestial and highest projection should be completed. Bartholomew was not hard at making a bargain, and the Doctor began to hope that, by a patient waiting and trust in the efficacy of these strange delusions, he should at length accomplish his desires.

A low tap at the door again betokened the presence of Lettice, who came to announce a warm friend of the Doctor's, one Master Eccleston. On being admitted, the latter brought with him a low ferret-eyed personage, whose leering aspect betrayed an inward consciousness of great cunning, and self-satisfaction therewith. Dee received his guests with becoming dignity, enquiring to what good fortune he was indebted for their visit.

"Thou mayest remain, Hickman," said he to his new acquaintance.

Eccleston proceeded to business as follows:—

"You may readily remember that I once happened a sore mischance, to wit, by losing a horse I had but lately bought, and which, through your good offices, kindly and without fee administered, I again got back, to my great joy and comfort. I was telling of this but few days agone to a friend of mine, one Barnabas Hardcastle, whom I have made bold to bring before your reverence. He but laughed at me for my pains, and would in no wise believe it; but mark how he was served! Within this hour, he tells me, that he has lost his mare, and would fain have the like help to its recovery."

"Hast thou lost thy beast?" enquired the Doctor.

"Verily I have," said Barnabas, making a respectful acknowledgment to the Doctor's dignified address. "It was but this morning she was safe as Mancastle is in the dirt, hard by Mr. Lever's house yonder, in the fields. 'T is a grievous loss, Master Dee, seeing that I was offered a score of pounds for the beast last Martinmas."

The Doctor opened his tables, and erected a scheme or figure of the heavens, to the very minute when this communication was made. Ere it was finished, he gave a sharp and shrewd glance at the stranger, saying,

"The latter part of the sign Scorpio ascendeth, and it 'is not safe to give judgment. Mars, lord thereof, is in evil aspect with Venus, lady of the seventh and sixth likewise, or house of servants. Yet is Mercury lord of the tenth, and free from affliction. I will, therefore, try my skill, though I should fail. The beast thou lackest is either taken by a servant, or lost through his neglect. Stay. The Dragon's Tail, which I have just placed, being located in the seventh, thy mare is certainly lost, and will never be recovered."

Dee looked earnestly at the man, who, gathering his features into a grin of contempt, could scarcely refrain from an unmannerly burst of laughter.

"Now, o' my troth," said he, "I was but minded to try the skill of your prophet, and to show your folly. The roan mare is safe, and I left her but an hour ago with my lad, who is walking her to and fro just out of the town-fields by Withy Grove, until I have done mine errand."

"Thou art a bold man to say so," replied the Doctor angrily, and with a glance as though it were meant to annihilate this contemner of the celestial art. "I tell thee she is lost, and shall never be got back: a reward thou hast well earned for thy folly."

With a scornful and malicious grin did Master Barnabas receive this denunciation, taking his departure with little ceremony, as if fearful of some mischance. Eccleston, much scandalised at his friend's proceedings, followed him down stairs, not caring to stay longer with the Doctor.

As Bartholomew and he sate discoursing on the future, and forming many projects, more particularly about the hidden treasures, without which, Dee said, he could not continue his search for the elixir, as he was nigh beggared, they heard a swift footstep on the stairs. Presently in rushed Eccleston, followed by Lettice, who strove to prevent this intrusion. The Doctor frowned on his entrance, but Eccleston, breathless and much agitated, could with difficulty declare his errand.

"Hardcastle — Hardcastle — I say. He has lost his beast."

"Why, I told him so," said the Doctor, with great composure.

"But he *has* lost her!"

"I know it," replied Dee.

"I have just left him in great anger, swearing by things both visible and invisible that he will have his own again; that we are confederate in the matter; and that he will cite us both before the chapter, or the star-chamber."

"How hath it happened?" said Dee, scrawling listlessly with his pen.

"I went with him to the boy, thinking I would see the end on't. By the way he did use many taunts and ill-natured speeches about my pursuit after the great arcanum, and belief in the celestial sciences; together with many unpleasant hints, that the money we have expended in the adventure will never be got back. Discoursing thus, we came near to the place where he expected to find the boy. Sure enough he was there, and fast asleep on the ground: but the mare was gone; the bridle being left on the lad's arm, which his master banged about his shoulders until he awaked. Pray, Master Dee, be pleased to help him to his mare. I owe him monies, for which he, taking advantage of the debt, may put me in prison."

"The scoffer shall not go unpunished, nor shall he that revileth partake of the blessing. Go thy way, and tell him he may not recover his goods."

Eccleston departed with this heavy message, and Bartholomew was again left communing with the Doctor.

The matter that still occupied their thoughts was the treasure at Aldport Lodge. With this in their possession, they might reasonably expect that great progress would be made in their search for the philosopher's stone and the vivifying elixir. These important articles obtained, the

hidden secrets of nature would be at their command, and their schemes and wishes might then be pursued with the certainty of success. The night but one following, at the precise time when the moon came to a trine aspect with Saturn and Jupiter, was appointed for the discovery. The hour of Saturn commenced five minutes before midnight, and the heavenly influences were then singularly disposed in favour of their undertaking.

With dazzling anticipations of future posterity and success they separated: one, to indulge in dreams so chimerical and vast, that even Fancy herself drew back, dazzled with her own brightness; the other, to an obscure lodging in the Old Millgate, where he committed himself to the keeping of a straw pallet and a coverlet, of which the rats had, for some time before, held undisputed possession.

The night fixed upon for their search proved drizzling and misty. Bartholomew, wrapped in a thick cloak, sallied out of a low postern towards the college. The path was more dangerous and uneven than at present, and many a grim witness of good-fellowship with his clay had the red cloth hose of Master Bartholomew Hickman, ere he arrived at the arched doorway which admitted him into Dee's lodging. We have no means of ascertaining with any degree of certainty the musings and ruminations of the seer in his progress, not having the power, or skill it may be, like unto many profound and praiseworthy historians, who can portray the form and colour of the mind, as well as the cut and capacity of the doublet. Suffice it to say, that he was so fully occupied in conning over his errand as not to be aware that a certain malicious personage was dodging his steps, to wit, our worthy owner of

the mare, Barnabas Hardcastle, who kept a strict watch about the premises, hoping to find some clue to the discovery of his beast.

An hour elapsed ere they came forth; the Doctor bearing a covered light, and after him the little spare form of Bartholomew Hickman, carrying under his cloak sundry implements for the search.

Passing through the churchyard they turned into the Dean's Gate, creeping near the houses, whose overhanging gables poured down a copious shower from their dripping eaves. The streets echoed but to the tread of these adventurers, and to the howl of a solitary watchdog roused by their approach. They passed the gate without difficulty; the Doctor was supposed to have been called forth on clerical duties, and the porter accordingly permitted their egress, merely enquiring the probable time of their return.

A few straggling houses were built nigh to the ditch and outworks; beyond these the way was open towards the park. Here they arrived in due time, entering in by a side wicket, which led them round to the back part of the house by the gardens.

The proprietorship of the Lodge had, latterly, fallen to the lot of Edward Mosley, by a deed of partition between his brother Oswald Mosley and himself, and a mercer of great note in Manchester, one Adam Smythe; these parties having purchased, jointly, the lands of Nether and Over Aldport, from Thomas Rowe of Hartford, who had them of Sir Randle Brereton, the next purchaser from William Earl of Derby. The house and grounds, about ninety-five acres, of Nether and Over Aldport, formerly belonged to the warden of the college for the time being,

and were held, by a rent of four marks per annum only, from the Lord de la Warre. It was enjoyed uninterruptedly by them until the dissolution of this community in the first of Edward VI., when it was granted to the Earl of Derby along with the rest of the college lands.

Elizabeth, however, in the twenty-first year of her reign, granted a new foundation to the college; but the Earl of Derby, who still kept possession of the college-house and some portion of the lands, suffered the warden and ministers for some time to lodge there.

The house at Aldport was moated round, and a drawbridge stood before the main entrance. The mansion was built of timber and plaster, with huge projecting stone chimneys, gable ends, and deep casements; a fitting residence in those days for rank and nobility.

Outside the moat was an extensive garden, laid out in a sumptuous style, beyond which appeared a mound of considerable elevation and extent, the site of Mancastle, famous in history as one of the strong-holds of the Romans, some account of which may be found in the legend of "Sir Tarquin."

"I have been thinking," said Dee, after being silent for a space, "that no savour of dishonesty can attach to our appropriation of this great treasure, seeing the house and all this fair and goodly inheritance did once appertain to the wardens of our college, of which patrimony we have been most unjustly deprived by the statute of King Edward. My gracious mistress, our Queen, not having reinstated me into this my lawful possession, I have made bold to remind her majesty of our wrongs, and to supplicate her clemency thereupon."

Bartholomew felt fully satisfied of the right they had to these spoils, his conscience being easily quieted on the score of appropriation.

"The rain becomes heavier, and it is more chill and showery than before. The mist, too, is driving north-east," said the Doctor. "The clouds are cumbrous and broken, coiling, as they roll, into huge masses, that will ere long bring some of the dark Atlantic on their tails. Seest thou not, Bartholomew, as though it were a grim pile of hills on the horizon?"

"I see, as it might be, a heavy wall of clouds gathering about us; and I think the wind comes on more fitful and squally. These heavy lunges betoken an angry and vicious humour in the air, that will not be long in bursting."

"We shall have it about our ears speedily. We must to work while it is yet a-brewing below."

The dark pointed roofs and chimneys of the Lodge might be distinguished in grotesque masses, changeless and unvarying, against the ever-shifting darkness of the sky. A pale star sometimes looked out as if by stealth, but was obscured almost ere its brightness could be developed. The wind, as it rushed by, broke into short and irregular gusts, like scouts from the main body, betokening its approach. The rain had ceased, save a few hasty drops at intervals, plashing heavily on the moat.

"What is that?" said Bartholomew in a whisper, pointing to the water. A light had glanced on its surface, and as suddenly had it disappeared.

"Again!" Dee smiled as he looked upwards to a star just twinkling through the cloud. Like some benignant spirit, as it alighted on the dark bosom of the moat, the

short sharp gust fluttering over, it seemed to hover there for a while ere it departed.

Turning out of the path, they approached a thick yew-tree, flanking one corner of the garden.

"I think we may climb here, Master Dee, with little risk;—there seems a fair gap beside its trunk."

They scrambled up a high bank, thrusting themselves, with some difficulty, through the opening. The Doctor now, looking round, began to recite his instructions:—"'*Nine with twice seven northerly and* ACER *shall disappear. The mystical number added to the number enfolding itself. This shall be added to its own, towards the rising of the sun. Then turn half round, and note well thy right foot;—what thou seest gather, and it shall lead thee on to perfection.*' Good; but from what point shall we begin to count?" said the divine, in great perplexity.

"I know not," said Bartholomew, "unless it be from the sycamore-tree at the opposite corner yonder by the old wall."

"Thou knowest the ground hereabout?" said the Doctor, hastily.

"Peradventure I may," replied the other. "Being told aforetime of treasure that was hidden, I have wandered often, at odd times, round the garden."

"Lead the way, then; it may be this same Acer is the tree of which thou speakest. Time passes, and I would not miss this lucky hour for all my hopes of preferment."

Preceded by his guide, the Doctor soon came within range of a noble sycamore, that threw out its huge branches in all the pride of a long and undisturbed occupation.

"'Nine with twice seven northerly, and Acer shall dis-

'appear.' Shall I stride the ground so many steps, or is there a mystic and hidden signification couched in these numbers?"

"I know not," said Bartholomew; "but we had best make the trial."

The Doctor, with great earnestness, began to stride out the number northerly, but the sycamore did not disappear: its long bare boughs were still seen throwing out their leafless and haggard extremities against the lowering sky.

They now took counsel, when Bartholomew suggested that, as numbers were often used symbolically, they must look elsewhere for a solution. It might be the exact number of trees lying between the great sycamore and the place signified. "And there they be," said the seer, pointing to a goodly row of small twigs newly planted. "Now count them northerly, beginning as at first."

This being done, the Doctor was greatly comforted on finding himself fairly soused up to the knees in a deep ditch or drain, from whence all appearance of the sycamore was effectually excluded.

"Now," said the adept, still standing as before, "the mystical number, which is three, added to the most excellent number, which I take to be three times three, or the number enfolding itself, will make twelve; but there be no trees eastward, or towards the rising sun."

"Then try the steps once more," said Bartholomew, "and take heed they are of the right length,—proper easy-going steps. Stay, I will count them myself."

Leaving his companion in the ditch, the seer counted forth his number with due care, halting at the last step.

"Now stand in my place, turn half round, and gather from thy right foot."

Dee, having cleared the bog, placed himself in the required position. Stooping down, he groped diligently by his right foot but was aware of nothing but a crabbed stump, that resisted every attempt they could use for its dislodgment.

"Bring the mattock," said the Doctor, cautiously uncovering the light. But though Bartholomew tugged with great energy, the Doctor helping, it was to little purpose, for the stump was immovable.

"We had best try the probe." Saying this, the warder drew forth an instrument, in shape something like unto a large auger. He could by this means easily ascertain if any thing hard were below, or any symptoms of concealed treasure. As they were thus engaged, a hollow voice, to their terrified apprehensions issuing from the ground, cried out

"Hold!"

The treasure-hunters came to a full pause. The wind and rain at the same time beat so heavily, they could not ascertain the sequel to this injunction.

"'Tis Nargal, the spirit who guards hidden treasures," said Dee: "we can approach him only by prayers and fumigations."

"Then must we return?" said Bartholomew, apparently unwilling to desist.

"Hark!" said the Doctor, listening.

They heard a moan, as that of some one in great pain. Presently a faint shriek stole through a pause in the blast.

"'Tis like the groan of a mandrake," he continued: "they do ever lament and bewail thus when gathered. I doubt not but this tree is of that accursed nature."

Again the voice was articulate.

"To-morrow thou mayest return,—at this hour;—but I will not yield my treasure save thou bring me gold!"

"Who art thou?"

"I am the guardian of the treasure; and

> Gold I have. Bring gold with thee;
> Or thou shalt get no gold from me."

"What is thy demand?" enquired Dee, in a hollow voice, like that of an exorcist.

"Prop thy purse with fifty nobles;—then dig, and I will tell thee."

The two worthies were somewhat startled at this demand. It was more than their joint forces could muster. Yet, two thousand and more broad pieces, besides other valuables, which lay there for the gathering, was too profitable a return to make them easily give up the adventure. Accordingly, after some further questions, which the demon as resolutely refused to answer, they departed, first replacing the earth and other matters they had disturbed in their former position.

Early on the following morning the eager divine applied to his friend Eccleston for another loan, assuring him it was the last; while, from the produce of the treasure, he would be enabled to pay his former advances, with a copious interest thereon. The needy expectant was loth to furnish him with another supply, though in the end he was prevailed on to borrow from his friends, at an exorbitant interest, for one day only.

This important preliminary being arranged, the night was anxiously awaited, and though more than usually tardy in its approach, twilight at length threw her mantle of grey over the world's cares and perplexities, and night,

that universal coverlet of all things, whether good or evil, did wrap them gently about.

And a night of more loveliness and lustre never was unveiled to the eye of mortals.

The stars were walking in brightness,—so clear and sparkling that each seemed a ray, or an emblem, of that ineffably glorious beam whose uncreated splendour no eye can see and live. Those bright clusters that we now behold have been the same through all generations, and they have seen "all things that are done under the sun." Fixed as the everlasting hills, their bounds and their habitation have been unchanged. The same lights were in the heavens when Abraham looked up from the plains of Mamre, as now when the Arab and the Ishmaelite are in the desert. The bands of Orion are not loosed, nor the sweet influences of the Pleiades unbound. The same glittering groups, which the patriarch beheld, beam nightly on our tabernacles. They have shone upon the world's heroes and the world's demigods;—bright links in the oblivion of ages. And the numerous hosts we gaze upon will present the same glowing and immutable forms, to cheer and gladden the eyes and hearts of coming generations.

Some feeling of this nature was probably rising in the Doctor's bosom, as they once more took the open path to Aldport; and he looked on the wide hemisphere about him,—the heavens, with their glowing constellations, all spread out without an obscurity or an obstruction. He felt for one moment the folly and futility of earthly things, and his heart seemed to wither in the immensity into which it was plunged.

It was like a faint glimpse of eternity, and he shrunk

back from the abyss, all his own vast world of thought, feeling, and desire, lost in that immeasurable space. But the dazzling dream of ambition again passed before him. The portals of universal empire and immortality were thrown open. He drove back the unwelcome intruder, but the phantom he pursued again fluttered from his grasp.

They had marked the spot on their former visit, and Dee, with the fifty gold pieces in his purse, Bartholomew Hickman acting as chief workman, began his unholy proceedings; not, however, without some fear of the demon whom these monies were to propitiate. Bartholomew laboured with great diligence, but the earth was much easier to remove than before, and the old stump soon gave way, making but a slight resistance. This was attributed to some charm wrought by the treasure they carried, and was looked upon as a favourable omen—an unloosing of the fetters which guarded the deposit. Every spadeful of earth was carefully examined, and the probe thrust down anxiously and with great caution. About a yard in depth had been taken away, when the spade struck upon something hard. The strokes were redoubled, and a narrow flag appeared. Raising this obstacle, they beheld a wooden coffer. Dee sung out a Latin prayer as usual; for he failed not to pour out his thanks with great fervour for any selfish indulgence that fell in his way, or, as he imagined, was granted to him by the special favour of heaven.

"There," said Bartholomew, raising the box, which from its weight and capacity promised a rich reward, "I think we have now what will season our labours well. What think you, Master Dee?"

But the Doctor was absorbed in visions of future greatness, now bursting on him with a glory and rapidity almost painful to contemplate. He seized the shrine, scarcely giving his helpmate time to fill up and conceal their depredations.

"But the fifty pieces—have you got them safe?" enquired Bartholomew.

"They are in my pouch. I do think the demon hath forgotten to demand them."

"Fear not, he will be ready enough to ask for his own. What comes o'er the devil's back will sooner or later go under his belly!"

"Let us pack and begone," said the Doctor, fearful of losing his treasure.

The box was presently swung over the seer's shoulders, Dee following to keep all safe, though not without many apprehensions and misgivings of heart. He feared lest the spirit might appear again for his own; or, at least, for the fifty pieces of gold, which were his right.

Just as they came to the gap by the yew-tree, and Bartholomew was resting against the trunk, a voice from behind them shouted

"Stop!—What make ye here, ye villains?"

Dee turned round, and the light flashed upon two armed men, masked, who evidently came towards them with no friendly intent.

"Put down that box," said the foremost.

Bartholomew was proceeding to surrender at discretion, but Dee first enquired their errand.

"We can tell ye that in a twinkling," said the malicious intruders, "after we have stepped up to the lodge, and

given them a pretty guess at the quality of the knaves who be robbing of their garden. Nay, Doctor, we take no excuse, unless we take our share of the spoil with it. To work, or ye budge not hence without discovery."

This was a provoking interruption,—their all depended on a favourable issue to this adventure. Dee, therefore, offered terms of capitulation as follows:—

"I 'll give ye five-and-twenty gold pieces on the spot, if ye will let us pass."

"Five-and-twenty!—why, that box may hold five-and-twenty hundred," said the freebooter, with a whistle, by way of derision.

"Perhaps not," said the Doctor warily; "it is not yet tried, and may not be opened here without risk. Come to my lodgings to-morrow, and we will share in the product."

"Nay, returned the rogue, sharply, "a pullet in the pen is worth an hundred in the fen. Come, we will deal kindly with thee: give us fifty, and pass on."

Dee willingly opened his pouch, and threw the gold into the fellow's greasy cap, which he held out for the purpose. Immediately they took to their heels, and departed.

"The demon was more kind, and of a different nature from those that do generally haunt these hidden treasures," said the Doctor, as he trudged along, following closely at Bartholomew's heels. "If he had not warned me to bring the gold, these thieves must needs have opened the box. Had they seen the vast hoard which it contains, I should not have been released for thrice the sum."

With mutual congratulations on their good fortune, and many pious thanksgivings on the part of Dee, they arrived,

without farther molestation, at the college, where Lettice was ill-humouredly awaiting their return.

Bartholomew threw down his burden in the study, where the Doctor, cautiously guarding against intrusion, wrenched open the chest. His rage and agony may be conceived, when he found the treasure transformed into a heap of stones, bearing the following malicious doggrel on their front:—

"My mare is lost, but I 've the gold;
My mare is better lost than sold.
Full fifty pieces, broad and bright,
My bullies bring me home to-night.
My trap is baited!—Springs it well?
I get the kernel, thou the shell!

"From thy loving

"Barnabus Hardcastle, *Armiger.*"

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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